

The Great Operas



Volume 2.

Martha

Semiramide

Manon

Norma

Marriage of Figaro

Aida

Der Freischutz

La Dame Blanche

Sappho

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The Great Operas

The Romantic Legends upon which
the Masters of Song have founded
Their Famous Lyrical Compositions

INTRODUCED BY
GIUSEPPE VERDI

(LAST OF THE GREAT COMPOSERS)

Edited by
JAMES W. BUEL, Ph.D



The Société Universelle Lyrique

London

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Berlin

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W. L. LEFTWICH-DODGE
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Martha

(AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING BY WILLIAM DE LEFTWICH DODGE)

LAONEL—"Let me take thy hand,
And imprint a kiss upon it,
To express the love I feel."

ACT III.—SCENE VI

MARTHA.

MUSIC BY FLOTOW.—WORDS BY ST. GEORGES.



VERY opera is supposed to be marked by some distinctive individuality, and to possess an interest separate from the motive of the composer, as well as independent of the music. This special interest is most commonly to be found in the history of the conception and the circumstances connected with the composition and presentation. Such characteristic distinctiveness is prominent in the opera of "Martha," the origin of which may be traced to a three-act ballet libretto, entitled "Lady Henrietta, or the Servant of Greenwich," written by M. de St. Georges in 1842, at the special request of the manager of the Paris Grand Opera. The literary work thus performed was so favorably regarded that, to facilitate its early production, the musical composition was entrusted to three maestros, viz.: Von Flotow, Burgmuller, and Deldeves, who were engaged by good promises, each to compose the music of an act. This collaboration was performed with such perfect harmony and symmetry that the ballet met with instantaneous

success, provoking very great applause wherever rendered. The plot concerned the adventures of two disguised court ladies at a country fair, and was so ingeniously and comically constructed as to suggest to Flotow the possibility of using it in the construction of an opera of permanent value and enduring popularity.

It was at Flotow's entreaty, therefore, that M. de St. Georges rewrote the libretto for lyrical representation, and when the manuscript was submitted, Flotow went into such an ecstasy that it was more than a month before he could reconcile himself to the task of undertaking the score, though the subject was in his mind to the exclusion of all else. The inspiration he so restlessly awaited came at last, and when the composition was finally begun proceeded so rapidly that the music was finished in a fortnight. The work is not, however, a few of the gems introduced by Burgmuller and Deldeves, but with such discrimination that the points of discernment.

The scenes of "Martha" are laid in England during the time of Queen Anne (seventeenth century), but the Italian version is two centuries earlier, and the French one century later than that of the English. And it is interesting to note that while the opera (first produced in English at London in 1858) has always been remarkably popular in Germany, France, Italy, and America, it has been rather coldly received in London, and when given at Covent Garden, in 1864, proved a pronounced failure; but it has succeeded well on several occasions in England since that time.

Act I.—Scene 1 opens with a view of Lady Harriet's chamber, that worthy being an attendant upon the Queen, who has an amiable maid named Nancy, and a punctilious but ardent lover known as Sir Tristan, more aged than handsome. Lady Harriet is in a state of ennui, which her friends seek to dispel by proffering presents of jewels, laces, silks and satins, but without avail. Nancy offers a nosegay sent by Sir Tristan, but Lady Harriet declares the odors sicken her; Nancy then would bestow a set of jewelry, "Diamonds which the richest envy," but these fail also to win her favor, and in petulant mood she dismisses her maid, saying:

"Leave me;
Go, ye whom my joys have known;
Sorrow wants not your attendance."

Whereupon the ladies retire, manifesting by look their deep solicitude, singing in chorus:

"Why these gloomy clouds of sadness?"



"Riches heap on you their treasure."

Nancy now attempts to persuade Lady Harriet to tell her why she weeps, and asks if it be love that has moved her virgin heart, the two singing an animated duet, entitled, "Of the Knights." Lady Harriet answers that love is both idle and insipid, and that flattery has lost its power to please. Still condoling, and striving to find the cause of her mistress' melancholy, the anxious maid implores:

"Riches heap on you their treasures;
Honor high is offered you."

But amid all the riches which surround her and the pleasures which her friends propose, Lady Harriet confesses her weariness, which even the bantering songs of Nancy cannot dispel, and, seeing the futility of her efforts to pleasantly distract her mistress' mind, declares there is no other hope of saving her, except through the conquering of her heart by some beguiling suitor.

Scene III.—A footman appears, to announce a visit from Sir Tristan, who enters with much solemnity and with grave speech inquires if the gracious lady of her Majesty has rested well, and seeks new diversions; to which Lady Harriet bids Nancy make answer. Sir Tristan then proposes a long program of entertainments, but meets interruptions and peevish objections with each announcement; though failing to suggest any pastime that promises to please, he feigns to perceive signs of favor, which encourage his hopes to win the ennuied lady's heart. Still proposing recreations, Sir Tristan's infatuation is presently put to menial service by Lady Harriet, who asks him, after each suggestion, to perform some servile duty, concluding her tauntings by bidding him close the window, and immediately afterwards to open it again. At this moment there is heard on the outside a chorus of servant girls, who are on their way to the annual fair at Richmond, singing "Light and gay, all the day!"

This sound of merry voices arouses Lady Harriet from her lassitude, who expresses the opinion that girls who sing so cheerily must be happy, which Sir Tristan deprecates with sneering remarks. Nancy goes to the window and, as the chorus is repeated, she explains to her mistress that the song proceeds from a company of country lasses who are on the way to Richmond where, after a day of festival, they hire themselves to the highest bidders for a year's service.

Being informed that this manner of hiring girls by farmers and their wives is a time-honored custom, Lady Harriet expresses the desire to be a witness of such a charming rural scene, and when Sir Tristan makes bold to declare it an absurd wish, she declares she will follow her fancy now just to pique his lordship, and orders Nancy to find and bring to her such peasant dresses as will enable her to mingle, without detection, with the country lasses. Sir Tristan is shocked by her proposal, but his objections to seeing his mistress so humbled have no other influence than to increase his embarrassment, for Lady Harriet now commands that Sir Tristan shall put on the garb of a rustic and accompany her, and feigning tenderness hands him a bouquet, saying:

"Your good heart prompts your consenting
Take this sign of my relenting."

To complete his humiliation, Nancy is ordered to teach Sir Tristan the graceless dances of the peasants:

"Feet bent outward, bold and wayward,
Briskly, crisply stamp the floor;
Hat knocked shapeless, half tipp'd over,
Reel and swagger, to and fro!"

Sir Tristan implores the ladies to spare him performance of such tormenting exercises, but his mortification and expostulations only serve to increase the humor of his persecutors, until in unbearable vexation he exclaims:

"I look very much like a bear.
Whom monkeys are forcing to dance!"

Scene IV represents the market place at Richmond, with tents, shops and tables, about which farmers and peasants are gathered, singing in chorus an encouragement to quick bargaining for faithful service. Servants now enter, who in turn sing, "Light and gay, all the day!" etc., and are welcomed by farmers, after which all disperse.

Scene V.—Two young men now appear, Lionel and Plunkett, who with whip in hand have come to the fair in



Wha - odigious agility! Bravo! Bravo!"



search of servants, since the death of their mother has left them without a manager of their household. The two fall to praising the merits of the mother who, besides being a capable housewife, was impartial in her regard, save that she may have been somewhat more indulgent to Lionel, her foster-son, on account of his delicate appearance. But there is no jealousy between them, and Lionel tells, with feelings of gratitude, of how Plunkett's parents, with great goodness of heart, had found him upon the doorsteps of his dying father's house, and gave him a home, singing, "Lost, proscribed, a friendless pilgrim," etc.

Plunkett answers, by revealing to Lionel that he never learned his father's rank, who was so near death that breath was spared him to tell no more than of the ring that is on his hand, saying:

"If your fate should ever darken,
Show it to the queen,
She will save you, she will guard you,
When no other help is seen."

"To his eye, mine kindly meeting"

Raised together like brothers the two feel the ties of kinship and pledge themselves to share each other's fortunes whatever betides.

Scene VI.—The interview is interrupted by the entrance of a crowd of farmers and servants as the clock strikes the mid-day hour, who in chorus sing:

"Hark, hark, the bell. In wig and robe
The sheriff comes the Fair to ope."

followed by the appearance of that officer, who, with pompous strut and sounding speech, commands the low-bred populace to draw apart and admit his passing; then producing a parchment he reads to the gathering the laws which govern the Fair, which provide,

"That all contracts made with servants
In the open market here,
Shall be binding upon both parties
For the ensuing year.
Not a power there is can break them
If money has been given and taken."

Having read the law, with which, however, all present are familiar, the sheriff proceeds to execute his duty as auctioneer. Calling the girl servants one by one, he asks each in turn what service she can best perform, and receiving their several recommendations, he sells their hire for the year to the many bidders, until all who can find masters have been thus disposed of, who then gather about the sheriff to receive their earnest money and to acknowledge their respective masters.

Scene VII.—Just as the general hiring is completed, Lady Harriet, Nancy, and Sir Tristan, all in peasant dress, come upon the scene, the ladies dragging his unwilling Lordship after them despite his protestations. Plunkett and Lionel have been unable to secure servants, and returning to the scene, they are both much pleased to see the two fair peasant maids, whom they have a mind to engage, but are too diffident to accost them. Sir Tristan beseeches the ladies to leave a place so illy suited to their station, but they prefer to remain to endure the tempting glances with which the two farmers view them, and pretend to be much dissatisfied with Sir Tristan, whom they call Bob, as a master in no sense to their liking. With the view of extricating him from his embarrassment, Plunkett and Lionel seek to console by assuring him that many other servants may be had, and to prove the fact they call aloud for girls, several of whom respond, who are directed to Sir Tristan as a gentleman who will engage one or more of the best. A bevy gathers about him, each crying her accomplishments, until his Lordship in distraction exclaims:

"My dilemma is dismayful!
Naughty witches, stop your braying!
To appease them naught availleth,
Reason faileth,
Flight alone may save me yet"

Whereupon he rushes from the stage pursued by the servant girls, still shouting their merits and begging to be employed. Martha and Nancy are thus left to attend to their own affairs, without the assistance of the gallant which Tristan assumes to be, a position, however, which they are disposed to appreciate.





Scene VIII.—The two disguised ladies comment upon the manner in which Plunkett and Lionel eye them, and of their timidity, while the two farmers banter each other to speak to the maids. Lionel at length frankly confesses that he has not the courage to do so, whereupon Plunkett very boastfully undertakes to engage them, but advancing a few steps his bashfulness overcomes his resolution and he returns to resume his clownish gazing. The ladies, provoked to see such diffidence, are about to take their departure, and sing, in quartet:

"Now, indeed, our leave we may be taking,
Since their bashfulness our enjoyment mars," etc.

Lionel and Plunkett take courage at this critical juncture, and the latter is persuaded to address them, in an awkward, hesitating manner, bluntly begging the maids wait a minute; that if they be smart and thrifty they will be engaged for years; which Lionel reinforces by repeating the words, "Yes, for years." The two ladies are much amused by this crude proposal, and fall to laughing so immoderately that Lionel is provoked, but Plunkett excuses their merriment by observing that they will work all the better for having a merry disposition.

At pronouncement of the word *work* the ladies are astonished. "Work? We?" "Certainly."

Plunkett answers, telling Nancy that to her care the geese, pigs and chickens shall be entrusted, while Lady Harriet shall till, with hoe and shovel, the field and garden. Lionel is more considerate of the delicate, and especially of the charming, appearance of the two and suggests that they be employed in house service only, to which Plunkett consents, and an offer is made of fifty crowns per year, with extras of a half pint of ale on Sundays, and plum-pudding on New Year's day, to which the ladies agree, and shaking hands the bargain is concluded by a payment of money, the binding import of which, however, Martha and Nancy do not suspect.

"All fly in haste we,
softly treading."

Scene IX—Sir Tristan reappears at this inopportune moment,—as the two ladies are about to be led away, somewhat against their wills,—still pursued by a crowd of importunate servants. He endeavors to shake off his persecutors by denouncing them as a crazy band, but they refuse to leave until he buys release by throwing to them a purse of money. Observing Lady Harriet and Nancy conversing with Lionel and Plunkett, Sir Tristan advances towards the latter and not understanding the situation, noisily exclaims:

"Ho! What's this? You are forgetting—come away."

To which Plunkett responds in a brusque manner:

"What may you want?"

The ladies, now appreciating their dilemma, would go away with Sir Tristan, but are restrained by Lionel and Plunkett, who insist upon them observing their agreement. Sir Tristan is about to disclose the identity of the ladies in order to secure their release, but they caution him against such an act, declaring that if their escapade should become known at court they would be disgraced, and that death is preferable.

Sir Tristan withholds his purpose, but endeavors to lead the ladies away, whereupon Plunkett commands them to remain, admonishing that they have been hired for a year, to affirm which he calls the sheriff to attest the title which he holds to their services. The sheriff and chorus now recite:

"If there's money given and taken,
The bargain must remain unshaken.
Yes, the law knows no relenting,
Since you're bound by free consenting,
Naught can free you from your fetters,
Now until a year is o'er."



"Here comes a game
for you."

W. L. POPE

Against their inclination Lady Harriet and Nancy get into a wagon with Lionel and Plunkett and are driven away, while Sir Tristan is prevented from giving assistance by farmers and peasants. As they make their exit the curtain falls upon the conclusion of the first act.

Act II, Scene I.—The opening of the second act is in the farm house of Lionel and Plunkett, to which Harriet and Nancy are introduced by their masters with such speech as victors might use toward their captives. The two, with sense of humiliation, feel that they are reaping a measure of punishment for their folly, which is not amended by the assurance that the house and its comforts shall be shared in common *for a whole year*; but the fullest realization of their unhappy situation comes upon the tenderly nurtured ladies when their masters give orders that they shall rise at break of day and be about their duties. This servitude arouses indignation and they exclaim, "More monstrous things they'll next command," which is soon fulfilled, for when they would seek

their chambers for the night, the fair servants are ordered to prepare a light repast, whereat they appear so distressed that Lionel has compassion and begs that they be excused. Plunkett has less mind to chance so much kindness in training servants, but is persuaded to be considerate of their exhaustion after the exciting affairs of the day, though with proper curiosity he demands to know the ladies' names. After some hesitation, not knowing just how to answer, Lady Harriet gives her name as "Martha," and Nancy adopts that of "Julia" as suited to her tender disposition. Plunkett, in no pleasant tones, now commands Julia to take his hat and mantle, but instead of complying the indignant girl saucily retorts, "Do it yourself." Lionel, who has secretly entertained an affection for Martha since first sight of her, presents his coat and in coaxing accents, asks: "Martha, take these things, prithee," but he is no more successful, for giving him a taunting look, she turns her back upon him. Lionel and Plunkett are dumfounded by such hauteur and disobedience, but resolved to test them further, they order the girls to bring two spinning wheels from the corner. They pretend to think the command a jest and ask if it is really expected of them to spin, at which Plunkett answers sternly and loud, "Certainly; do you think we engaged you to talk? If you wish your wages paid you must earn them first." The brusqueness of Plunkett's manners so alarms the girls that they proceed quickly to obey, and bringing the wheels make ludicrous efforts to start them. Astonished by their ignorance, Lionel and Plunkett try to teach the girls, which action introduces a quartet, "What a charming occupation," which is one of the most delightful numbers in the opera. This pretty play, wherein love is rapidly developing, is presently interrupted by Julia overturning her wheel, who then runs off, pursued by Plunkett. Martha cries after the retreating Julia, begging that she be not left alone; her appeals being futile, she starts to follow, but Lionel artfully bids her stay, whereupon the two sing an exquisite duet, "To his eye, mine kindly meeting." Being alone, Lionel summons courage to confess his love, which he expresses so ardently that Martha is appreciative, but disguises her

feelings, and asks to be sent away as an idle servant who cannot earn her bread.

Lionel grows more impassioned, and, pleading his love, declares that her going away would break his heart; that work she shall not, her only duty he will crave is that she may sing to cheer him. And thus entreating, by many artful enticements, he finally persuades Martha, by offering a nosegay for a song, to sing: "'Tis the Last Rose of Summer."

When the lines are finished, Lionel pours forth his love in pleading accents, and startles her with his protestations, though she is not insensible to his wooing, and simulates desire to go, which moves him to implore,

"Stay and hear me,
Oh, accept in holy union
Here my hand: Oh, be my wife."

and when this declaration fails to win her heart he kneels at her feet, and thus prostrate, avows his passion, at which Martha affects mirthfulness, and the two declare their feelings in an exquisite duet, "She's Laughing at My Sorrow."



"Let me take thy hand."

Scene III.—This pretty scene is interrupted by Julia, who comes running in, hotly pursued by Plunkett, who with much vexation admonishes:

"Don't you try this game again, girl!
Where do you suppose she was?
In the kitchen was the vixen,
Breaking bottles, glasses, dishes,
And a good deal have I suffered,
Till at last I caught the lass."

He seizes her with some roughness, but Julia forces release by bidding him let go, at the peril of seeing some scratching done, at which display of spirit Plunkett confesses to be pleased, but commands the girls to betake themselves to bed, as the midnight bell is ringing, hoping that sleep may serve to improve the temper of the saucy one. The girls speak their good night, but, in asides, declare that were they from this scene, safe home, they would never imperil their stations by playing peasants again.

As Martha and Julia retire into their chamber, Lionel and Plunkett quit the room by a large door which they are careful to lock after them.

Scene IV.—Very soon the two girls craftily emerge into the hall, where they endeavor to concert means for their escape, and bewail with one another the folly that brought them into such a perilous situation. While thus decrying their ill fortune a noise is heard upon the outside, followed by the voice of Sir Tristan, who has found their rural quarters and come to rescue them.

Scene V.—The girls are happy over the prospect of escaping and help Sir Tristan through the window, after which he tells them of the carriage which he has provided, that stands by a convenient corner, and then with little delay the three depart through the window by which Sir Tristan has entered.

Scene VI.—Plunkett comes back into the hall, rubbing his eyes and complaining of the dissipation of his servants, who he thinks have not yet gone to bed, at which moment he hears the noise of carriage wheels, and at the same time discovering the open window he is distressed by suspicion that the girls have escaped. He calls loudly to Lionel, who enters as the impetuous Plunkett bursts open the chamber door to find the girls gone. They sigh over their losses, and Lionel begs Plunkett give chase of the fugitives for his sake, which he proceeds to do by ringing a great bell vehemently, to summon friends and neighbors to his assistance. A number of peasants, half asleep, run in and demand to know what awful thing has happened, that they should be summoned at such an hour.

Plunkett hastily explains that his servants have absconded, and offers one pound sterling reward to the man who will apprehend and bring them back! Such a tempting offer has immediate effect, the peasants in chorus shouting their determination to restore the girls to their yoke, with which the second act concludes.

Act III, Scene I.—The opening scene of the third act shows a small inn situate on the edge of a forest, with farmers seated at tables drinking, and Plunkett sings a song in praise of the wine that is served them. The revel is interrupted by the sound of a hunter's horn, upon which the chorus disperse as Plunkett enters the inn to pay the reckoning.

Scene II.—The queen and her lady attendants, dressed as huntresses, enter, who in chorus sing of their chase after brave huntsmen:

"Now we awe them and subdue them,
Now we coax them and allure them,
Now pursue them to the nets,
Till in the snare the poor thing frets:
That's our sport and our delight."

Julia appears, and, as if unconscious of the company, sings of the agitation of her heart, which she is not able to fully interpret, but suspects she has been wounded by Cupid's darts. The ladies advance and repeat the chorus, after



"My lord, this is my servant"

which, in Scene III, Plunkett appears at a back door, but seeing the ladies, stops, speaking to himself:

"There seems to be good game afoot here;
I'll see if I can't catch one or two!"

Julia is much concerned about her mistress, whom she has not seen for a while, and perceiving a man in the door whom she fails to recognize, makes bold to ask Plunkett if he can inform her where the countess (Lady Harriet) may be found. Plunkett immediately seizes and holds her fast, despite her protests, and avows that she knows him not, until her cries for assistance bring out a band of huntresses who surround and threaten him with their spears. He expostulates against such violence, and in a moment of opportunity dashes away pursued by the ladies.

Scene IV.—Lionel enters, pale and dejected, abstractedly singing, "The Last Rose of Summer," which serves to conjure a vision of the sweet singer from whose lips he first heard it, for whom he mourns as one lost, but who is become the arbitress of his destiny,

"With her beautiful virginal smile
Which for me changed earth to heaven."

Throwing himself disconsolately upon a bank of grass, with melancholy melody he sings a beautiful solo, "Like a Dream Bright and Fair," at the close of which, in Scene V, Sir Tristan and Martha stroll across the stage, and the former asks why she has left the queen to seek such a secluded place? but he receives no other answer than a woman's excuse, that the sadness of her heart makes

Dost thou dare to offer such a hand?"

her wish to be alone; thereupon dismissing Sir Tristan she eases her disquieting thoughts by rendering, "Here in deepest forest shadows, dreaming of love's enchanting vows."

Scene VI.—Lionel reappears and is startled at hearing the voice for which he has been pining, and rushes joyfully forward to give her a passionate greeting. But she receives him coldly, and audaciously declares she knows him not, that he is none other than a presumptuous dreamer. Begging still for recognition, and if it be a dream that he may not waken, he kneels and kisses her hand. She assumes a defiant attitude, telling him to begone, that such impertinence she will no longer submit to. Maddened by her resistance to his pleadings, he presently asserts his mastery and commands that she come with him as his servant. When he would lead her away she cries lustily for help, to which, in Scene VII, Sir Tristan promptly responds, and with an exhibition of intense anger he demands to know the cause of such outrageous indignity to the lady.

"A peasant dare to insult you?
Let so scandalous an outrage
Have its chastisement swiftly!"

Lionel explains that his action is but the assertion of his rights as master over an absconding servant, at which Sir Tristan calls his friends, the huntresses, who rush on and threaten to punish the peasant for his audacity. But Lionel bravely withstands their violent demonstrations, resolved not to lose her again, while Martha exhibits compunction by expressing shame for the situation to which her folly has brought her. At this juncture Plunkett enters, followed by Julia, who solicitously inquire the cause of the commotion, and Lionel beholding the two, suspects the affair is a cruel jest, whereupon Sir Tristan undeceives him by ordering his arrest, to which all his expostulations are vain. The two ladies become compassionate and implore that the poor fellow be treated with clemency, perceiving that the affair has become more serious than they had anticipated. Lionel, now appreciating the seriousness of his situation, begs the officer to hear his defence, of how Martha accepting earnest money has become bounden thereby to his service, and is lawfully his servant for one year, but the chorus make sport of his claims and discomfiture, while Martha aggravates his humiliation by pronouncing him an object of pity, saying: "He has evidently lost his senses, but he is not knowingly culpable."

Lionel believing he is upon the point of losing both sweetheart and servant, and feeling that he is quite undone by cruel circumstance, plaintively sings to Martha:

"Heaven may to you grant pardon,
That you broke my trusting heart;
That where burning love you kindled,
You did bitter woe impart."

in which the others join in contrapuntal chorus. Martha is deeply touched by Lionel's misery; indeed cherishing a secret affection for her admiring master, which prompts the oracular Tristan, erstwhile lover, to observe:

"She now sees the folly of her caprices;
She despised my counsels!
And now vainly attempts to repair her error.
By her grief I am avenged."

A blare of trumpets announce the Queen's approach, whereupon in his shame Lionel draws from his finger the ring given him by his dying father, and handing it to Plunkett bids him carry it to the Queen, who by this token may save him from prison. Following this scene a

party of ladies in hunting dress enter and sing of the chase, responded to by a chorus of men singing of the pursuit of a stag, and when the song is finished they seize Lionel and lead him away, at which the curtain falls on the third act.

Act IV, Scene I.—The fourth and last act opens with a representation of the hall of the old farm house, in which Plunkett is discovered alone, bewailing the sorrowful condition of poor Lionel and cursing the hour when the cause of his love-grief was brought under their roof; expressing his miseries he dolefully sings, "Soon Will My Lionel Die," etc.; but even while singing of Lionel's distress of mind he wonders if his own sufferings may not be due to love's hidden fire, lighted by the flash of Julia's eye!

Scene II.—Martha and Julia enter, and meeting Plunkett, they propose to concert means to restore the mind of Lionel, to which end Martha requests him to withdraw with Julia, who will explain her design. As they pass out Martha begins to sing the beautiful air that first enraptured Lionel.

Scene III.—The sweet sound of Martha's voice reaches Lionel's ears, who, striding into the hall, in tones of anger bitterly upbraids her:

"You wish that I should die, traitress!
Iniquitous siren, cease that song
Which brings me naught but misery and death!
(Throwing away his flowers.) Behold these flowers
Which thou gavest me, crushed and withered!"

Martha is conscience-stricken for having pursued her folly to his undoing, and pleads with him to hear her and show mercy, but he scornfully spurns her as a being fit only to receive the contempt of an honorable man; a woman whose fascinations are poison-stings to destroy those who feel them. Still beseeching, Martha obtains his patience to hear:

"Let the remorse I feel;
Let these tears stay thy reproaches!
I have wrought a change in thy destiny;
I myself presented to the Queen the ring
Which thy dying father bestowed on thee.
Thou art the son of Count Derby,
Who was unjustly banished from this country.
And the Queen would make reparation to thee
For the unjust exile of thy parent.
Thou art Count Derby, and on thy brow
Mayst place the coronet of a peer of England."



"He comes, sad and sorrowful!"

Lionel staggers under this surprising news, doubting, dreaming; but when Martha not only reaffirms her declaration, but offers her hand to him as a pledge and token of unceasing love, he sternly and with energy refuses to take a hand which has presented a cup of anguish, which has wounded while caressing, which has brought him to prison and prepared him for the tomb. She vows her sincere repentance, and pleading for forgiveness tells him he can open heaven to her view if he will pity her anguish; but he remains inexorable, and commands her to hide from his fury, since eternal hatred reigns in his heart, and so saying, hurriedly leaves her presence.

Scene IV.—Julia and Plunkett appear as Lionel pronounces his eternal hatred, and Plunkett speaks his sympathy



for the wrong which his foster-brother has received at the hand of Martha, at which the latter begs to hear no more reproaches, and imploring the help of friends to win Lionel's love again, she retires, wailing:

"Ah! no more—I will persevere in the attempt!

My friends, my hopes now are in you;

Yes, he whom this heart adores.

Must to my feet be brought again!"

Scene V.—Plunkett and Julia are distressed for means to effect a reconciliation between Martha and Lionel, and declare their purpose to compass so dear an end. But such reconciliation, Plunkett naively declares, will separate him from Lionel, and he cannot endure the thought of henceforth sitting and sighing in solitary melancholy in his poor dwelling. With compassion for his lonely situation, Julia advises Plunkett to marry, whereupon, hoping to excite her jealousy, he tells her of the pretty neighbor girls whom he might have for the asking, but when she wonders at his refusal to take one from among so many eligibles, he admits that he has love for a lass who though possessed of an excellent heart has little else to recommend her, for being ignorant of all kinds of

"Have you obeyed all my orders?"

work she is fit only to be a rich man's wife. Julia archly suggests that so charming a girl may learn to cook and spin for the man she loves! Thus encouraged, Plunkett sets aside his diffidence, and boldly asks her to marry him, but before receiving her answer he tells her he is faithful to his friend, and must secure his safety before settling an affair of love.

Scene VI.—The final scene represents a reproduction of the setting in the first act, showing booths and benches, with farmers and servants, in resemblance of the Richmond Fair, which arrangement has been made by the secret orders of Lady Harriet, who has conceived a happy purpose to surprise Lionel and Plunkett, and at the same time to recover the love which her harsh conduct has alienated. Everything has accordingly been conceived in perfect simulation of the Richmond Fair, and to render the situation more effective, the ladies clothe themselves in peasant garb, and appear at the window while giving their orders to the crowds below, the whole composing a laughable scene. As the arrangements are

proceeding the company re-enact the introductory scenes of the Fair as in Act I, and while thus working preparing for the mock bazaar, in chorus they sing :

" Arrange the benches in two rows ;
Bring the arm chair for the beadle ;
Here the other seats, all placed
In the same position as they were at Richmond.
Here, the servants—there, the farmers,
The housekeepers, and the hucksters.
The sheriff will sit here
To ratify the contract."

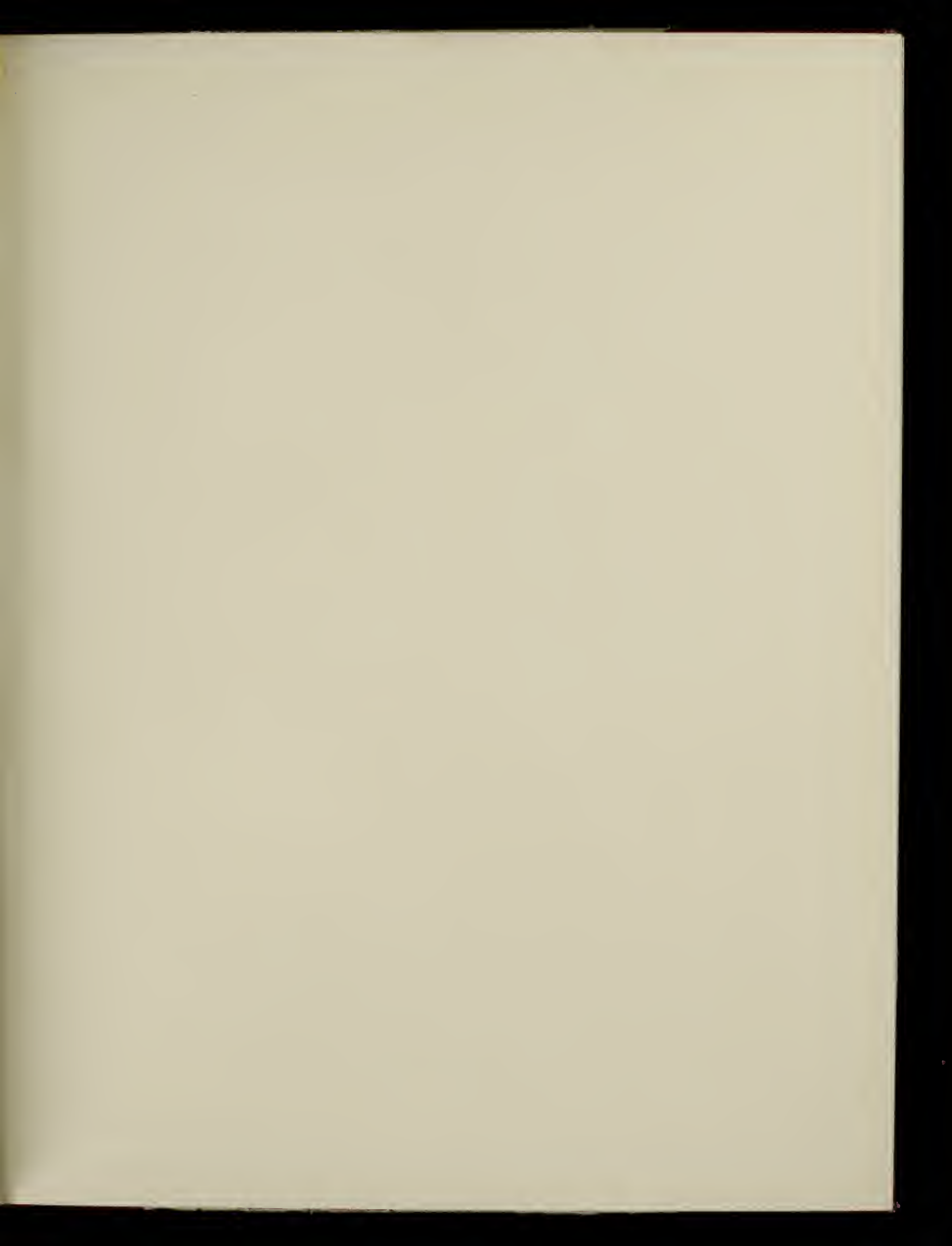
While the chorus is thus singing and dressing up a mock sheriff, Lady Harriet (Martha) and Nancy (Julia) come upon the scene in peasant costume, to ask if all the arrangements are complete, and orders fully obeyed. Directly following the two ladies are Plunkett and Lionel, the latter supported and so woe-appearing as to excite the sympathy of all present. Julia is first to perceive him and comments upon his sorrowful countenance, which she predicts will presently change to one of joy. At this juncture a clock is heard striking the mid-day hour, at which signal the Fair scenes which distinguished the opening of the play are re-enacted ; farmers seeking servants, and girls shouting their accomplishments until the babble grows tumultuous. Plunkett leads the delirious Lionel into the crowd and to his questioning as to the cause of so much confusion, explains that the voices proceed from Richmond servants ; thereupon he calls to Martha and asks what she can do. At the sound of this name Lionel arouses from his delirium, and recognizing her, is overwhelmed with joy, demonstrations which she lovingly reciprocates by taking his hand and addressing him with much emotion :

" My dreams of wealth and gold
I can forget, I can despise ;
I only retain the recollections
Of love and tenderness."

The two lovers being now reconciled, with nothing lacking for their happiness save consummation by the ceremony, Plunkett turns to Julia and asks what she can do, to which she answers in the sing-song manner of servants seeking hire, "I can cook, I can bake," etc., whereat Plunkett laughs heartily and declares she is jesting, since she can do nothing, nevertheless he is willing to take her and bids her come along. "There, take that as an earnest," she responds, boxing his ears, at which vixenish display all laugh and pronounce the retort as well merited as given heartily, which Plunkett receives as a token of affection, but will take his revenge when they are married.

Lady Harriet (Martha) resumes her former song, "The Last Rose of Summer," which causes Lionel to awaken as from a dream, and all join in a pæan of joy at the happy outcome of two ladies' folly at the Richmond Fair.







Semiramide

(AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING BY WILLIAM DE LÉFÉWICH DODGE)

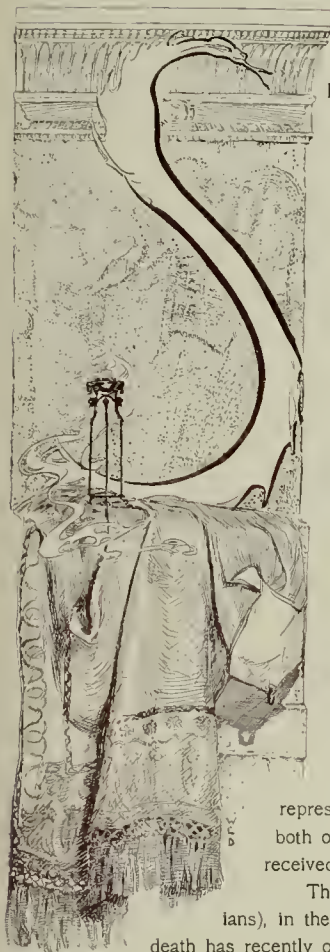
SEMIRAMIS—*"Adored spirit of a demi-god,
What wouldst thou of us?
Speak! To punish comest thou,
Or dost thou pardon bring?
Pronounce, oh ghost, of Arsaces the destiny!"*

ACT I.—SCENE XI

SEMIRAMIDE.

(SEMIRAMIS)

MUSIC BY ROSSINI—LIBRETTO BY GAETANO ROSSI.



EMIRAMIDE is not entitled to rank with what are truly the greatest operas, nor with the best of Rossini's works, "Barber of Seville" and "William Tell," but it is remarkable for its scenic opportunities, deals with an exceedingly interesting subject, and contains several melodic gems, as powerful as they are beautiful. No one who has heard this grand opera sung can ever forget the music that accompanies the apparition of the ghost of Ninus, a wild, weird interpretation of the horror that Assurus feels, nor will the sweetness of the duet of Arsaces and Semiramis soon fade from delightful remembrance. The historic basis of the opera is extremely attractive, and to this extent it is educational, though the fortunes of the great Assyrian queen are not followed with fidelity by the librettist.

According to the somewhat mythical history, the Assyrian Empire, which extended over Asia as far as India, was created by Ninus, who is credited with being the builder of Nineveh. Ninus was the greatest of Assyrian kings, yet he fell in love with Semiramis, who was wife of one of his captains, a love which it is declared was aroused by a valorous exploit she performed at the siege of Bactra. Ninus forcibly espoused Semiramis, and when he died left his powerful kingdom to her management, which she not only preserved, but greatly extended. She proved herself greater as a queen than Ninus had been as a king; by her prowess she conquered and annexed a part of India, though she was unable to subjugate the whole country; her greater works, however, were the founding of cities, of which Babylon was the most important, erecting stupendous monuments, and opening roads so as to bring all parts of her kingdom into easy communication. The legend relates that after reigning forty-two years she strangely disappeared; some declare she was changed into a dove and was thereafter worshiped in that form.

Rossini's lyric tragedy, in two acts, was taken from Voltaire's "Semiramis," which is a Babylonish version of a tale of Agamemnon, wherein is recited the vengeance taken by Arsaces upon his guilty mother, Semiramis, who, with the help of Assurus, her paramour, has murdered Ninus, her husband. A version of the Biblical story has also been produced as an oratorio, but it is not adaptable to such treatment and failed, as it deserved to do. Rossini's opera had its initial representation in Venice, February 3, 1823, and in July following was given at the Academie, Paris, in both of which places it scored a decided success, but when first given in London (1824), it was coldly received, though its popularity has ever since been great.

The beginning represents a religious festival in the Temple of Belus (Bel, the chief god of the Assyrians), in the city of Babylon, at which Semiramis is to choose a successor to her royal husband, Ninus, whose death has recently occurred. Assurus, a prince of the blood royal, expects to be selected, but the queen has determined to nominate Arsaces, a young officer, commander of her armies, for whom she has secretly conceived a passion. While the ceremonies are being performed a violent storm arises, and a lightning bolt extinguishes the sacred fire, at which consternation seizes the people, who regard the incident as an omen of coming ills. The fears and protestations of the priests induce Semiramis to suspend the ceremonies until the return of Arsaces, who has been sent to consult the oracle in the inner temple at Memphis. When Arsaces arrives he delivers to Oroë, chief of the Magi, a casket who opening it, discloses a scroll, upon which is written in mystic characters the oracular answer, which, being interpreted, exposes the secret that Ninus has been murdered.

Semiramis is indifferent to the rendering of Magi prognostics, and insists on choosing a successor to Ninus, who shall become her husband, and thereupon names Arsaces. Instead of receiving the honor with manifestation of joy, Arsaces vehemently reprobates the queen's selection, and boldly confesses that his heart has already been given to Azema, a princess, to whose hand, however, Assurus also aspires. Semiramis is set into a great rage by this rejection

of her favor, an exhibition of which results in dark allusions being made by Assurus to a crime that she has committed, whereat Semiramis insinuates counter-accusation, and thus the people learn that Ninus has been poisoned by Assurus at the instigation of the queen. This revelation is followed by new omens of terrible import. The tomb of Ninus flies open and from the sepulchral vault the murdered king steps forth in his royal cerements and summons Arsaces to return with him to the abode of death, where he is informed that Ninus, a legitimate heir of the dead king, still lives. When Arsaces returns from the tomb the priests attempt to invest him with the royal regalia, but he remonstrates against an act that would wrong the rightful successor, until Oroë, chief of the Magi, reveals that Arsaces himself is the long-lost Ninus, and discloses that Semiramis and Assurus are the guilt-stained murderers of the king, whose death Arsaces (Ninus) is commanded to avenge. Arsaces is confounded by this horrible revelation; he would quickly obey the command to destroy Assurus, but he recoils at the suggestion of being the executioner of his mother. Semiramis, however, is ignorant of the fact that Arsaces (Ninus) is her son, and despite his protests continues to lavish upon him her most passionate caresses, until he places in her hand a statement, written by Ninus during the last hour of his life, which discovers the crime of the queen and her accomplice, and that he, Arsaces, is indeed Ninus, her son.

Semiramis is overwhelmed with remorse at this revelation, and betrays such intense suffering of mind that Arsaces (Ninus) compassionates her agony and forgives her crime, but with his father's sword he pursues Assurus into the recesses of the tomb, where he is upon the point of running him through when Semiramis, who has followed, unobserved, suddenly steps between, and receives the weapon in her own heart.

Act I, Scene I.—A royal festival in the splendid Temple of Belus is in progress. Oroë, chief of the Magi, is before the sanctuary, at the foot of the great statue of the Assyrian god, in an attitude of pious contemplation, and about the temple are ministers and priests in worshipful attitudes. Oroë breaks the silence by uttering a prayer, and dedicating the temple to the uses of the present occasion, whereupon the priests open the great side gates and enter its most sacred aisles as Oroë retires into the sanctuary.

Scene II.—The temple having been prepared to receive the people, a great crowd of both sexes, bearing offerings, file into its spacious naves, and arranging themselves in groups render a chorus of praise to their deity:

"Belus, all-honored! Belus, so far-famed!
Sounds of festivity, songs of devotion,
This day through the air resounding,
To the praise of Belus shall be chanted.
From Ganges the golden, from Nile the haughty,
From Tigris the unconquered, from the whole universe,
Come hither, all ye nations, this great day;
And sacred to Belus let the day be!
When from his realms above
In all his glory will descend,
To make Assyria one scene of joy!"



"The heavens are obscured with dire thunder!
The temple shakes to its base! Oh, event unhappy!"



"Behold me at length in Babylon!
And here is of Belus the Temple."

At the conclusion of this choral chant a body of Indians enter, and grandees and satraps advance, followed by Assurus and slaves carrying offerings. As they arrive before the sanctuary, Assurus bids the

people be hopeful and joyous, for this day the fate of Assyria will be changed by the queen making selection of a successor to the kingly throne, flattering himself with the vain belief that he will be that fortunate one:

"When my true faith and oft-tried valor
Cannot by her be overlooked,"

Oroe gravely expresses surprise that one like he should presume to sit upon the throne of Ninus; at whose portentous words Assurus trembles with a fear that the Magian has discovered his crime; and Idrenus, a member of the royal household, perceives some woe foreboded by Oroe, who speaks fiercely to Assurus, saying: "Yes, I know you well, and scarcely can my rage conceal."

The chorus now announces in strains of adulation the approach of the mighty queen, who in Scene III enters, preceded by royal guards, satraps, princes and bedizened officers. Beside her are Azema and Mitranes, behind whom appear princesses, ladies of the court, and slaves with rich offerings to Belus. The royal cortege files before the great statue as the chorus chants a praise. Semiramis advances in hesitant mood towards the altar and asks herself:

"Mid all these lords and potentates
Within this heavenly dwelling,
Why trembles thus and palpitates
My wretched heart? Ah, why?"

To which reassuringly Assurus bids the queen dismiss her fears in this assemblage of loyal subjects; where there are none who withhold obeisance, and where all proffer their devoted service, therefore does he obsequiously invite:

"To the altar, O Queen! and swear
Before all Assyria here gathered,
And from among us pray select
To Ninus a successor"

Apparently encouraged, Semiramis draws near to the altar, but pauses and stands undecided as if reflecting, then utters to herself, "Why comes he not?" Assurus, Idrenus and the chorus intone, "Ah, what delays thee? Who's expected?" ignorant that her hesitation is due to the absence of Arsaces, whom she would choose as royal spouse and kingly successor. At this moment of interruption a flash of lightning leaps down the open court, and carries consternation

to the assemblage Semiramis, in her terror, calls upon Heaven, and pronounces the name of the murdered king. Oroë, appalled at the display of elemental anger, orders that the rites be suspended, but his command does not arrest the divine vengeance, which is manifested by peals of thunder that shake the temple and cause an extinguishment of the sacred fire. The people, terrified at such portentous signs, appear in wildest distraction, and predict that some direful destiny is about to befall the nation, while Semiramis appeals to the oracular sage:

"Oh, thou of the Magi, the venerable chief—
Mortal favor'd of Heaven, and of its secrets—
The faithful interpretation, oh speak!
Is the wrath against Babylon not appeas'd?"

In answer to her impassioned exhortation, Oroë draws close to Semiramis and mysteriously hints at atrocious crimes yet unrevealed and unpunished, the while fixing his gaze upon Assurus, and predicting that the hour of vengeance is not far off. Semiramis cannot dissemble her dread, and Assurus shrinks from the eye of the accusing priest, though he is still insistent that a kingly successor shall be named. Oroë bids him be less anxious, that the choice shall be made this very day as soon as from Memphis shall arrive the sacred oracle. Assurus, fearing that delay may jeopardize his chance of being chosen, that the oracle may pronounce a more worthy successor, urges his claims:

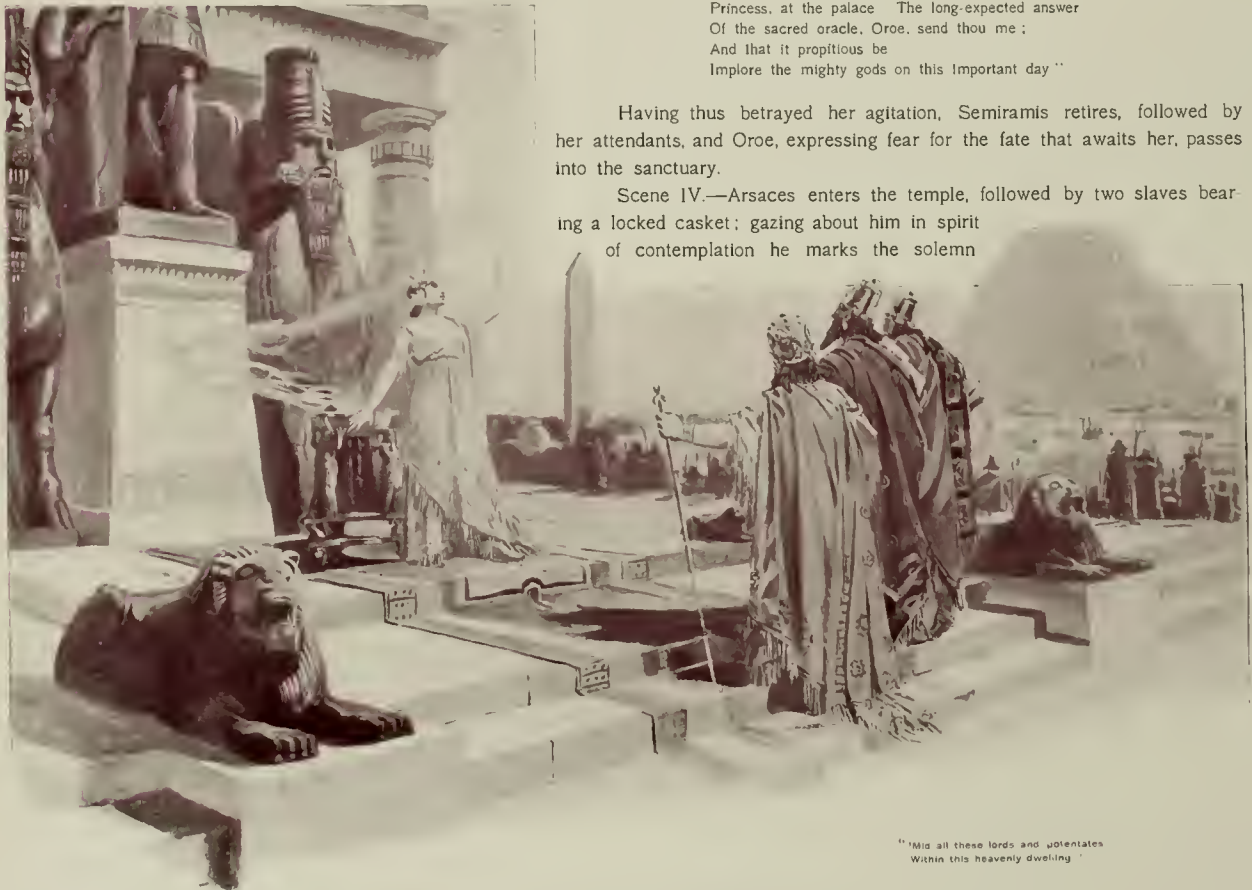
"Within my veins
Flows the blood of Belus; and well thou must,
O Queen, remember!"

But Semiramis is in no humor to hear his petitions, and wards his importunities by impatiently answering:

"Yes, all, all, Assurus! I await you,
Princess, at the palace The long-expected answer
Of the sacred oracle, Oroë, send thou me;
And that it propitious be
Implore the mighty gods on this important day"

Having thus betrayed her agitation, Semiramis retires, followed by her attendants, and Oroë, expressing fear for the fate that awaits her, passes into the sanctuary.

Scene IV.—Arsaces enters the temple, followed by two slaves bearing a locked casket; gazing about him in spirit of contemplation he marks the solemn



"Mid all these lords and potentates
Within this heavenly dwelling"

silence of the sanctuary, which, housing divinity, stirs in him a dread greater than battle conflict has ever inspired. He marvels at the new-born terror which has been awakened by an influence which he is unable to comprehend:

"My dying father
Hither commanded me—the queen, in secret,
My presence at the palace also commands;
And, breathless, to Azema on the wings of love
I've hither come, my ardent soul t' appease."

His feelings he charmingly expresses in a solo, "Ah! that day I well remember," followed by a cavatina, "Ah! from that happy day."

Scene V.—Oroe reappears, proffering his attendance, at which Arsaces kneels devoutly and offers the casket, which contains "precious pledges which my father from every eye has concealed." The Memphian oracle is about to be declared! Oroe bids him rise, and embracing him tenderly, receives the box, the contents of which to his Magian mind are known, and he thus reveals:

"Oh, sacred relics
Of the most god-like of kings! The dreadful
Book of death here view! The royal crown
Behold, adore it! See the sword
That must avenge him—the sword dread,
That Asia vanquished, and Egypt conquered;
Weapon powerless 'gainst treason,
Or against foul poison!"

Arsaces is all attention at the Magian's words, which plainly imply some treacherous crime by which Ninus was reft of life, and earnestly he beseeches that the secret be revealed. Oroe confesses that the king died of treason, but to Arsaces' prayer for further information the priest, looking anxiously about, will no fuller answer vouchsafe than to intimate that a revelation will soon be made:

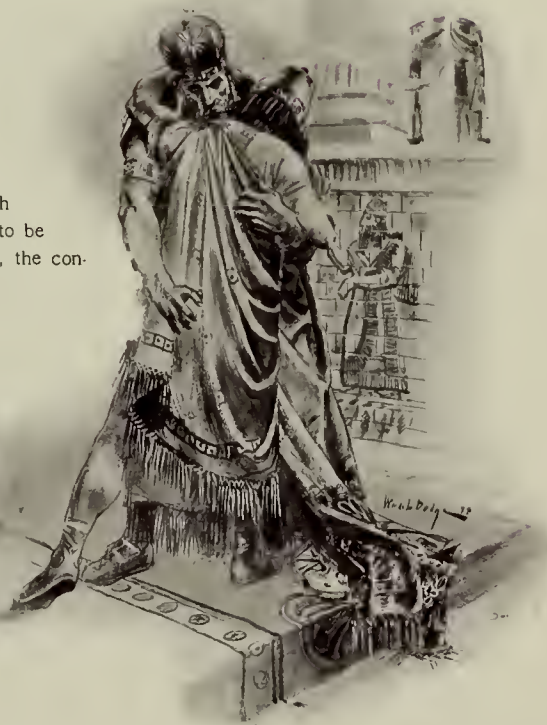
"Another time—sh—some one
Approaches—'tis Assurus: Oh, monster! The Deity
His steps has hither guided not in vain Farewell!"

Scene VI.—As Oroe and waiting priests pass out, carrying the casket, Assurus enters, his attendants remaining in the background. There now ensues a stormy scene between Arsaces and Assurus, the latter fiercely demanding to know by what right or whose leave he has returned to Babylon? Arsaces makes bold to answer that he has come in obedience to the orders of the queen, and the desire of his own heart, since on this day reward for his courage and fidelity is promised. Assurus arrogantly questions him further, if he has not come to seek Azema, and when for answer Arsaces admits his adoration of the princess, Assurus admonishes him that Azema is daughter of a king, and from her birth has been betrothed to Ninus. Arsaces is not slow with his reply that, Ninus being dead, and that Azema, by his help, having been saved from a miserable destiny, he feels secure in her affections, which may not be replaced by any rival, and least of all by one consumed of lustful ambitions and such a stranger to love and tender feelings as he.

Assurus is beside himself with anger at what he chooses to pronounce the rash avowals of one so far beneath him, and commands Arsaces to renounce Azema or bear the consequences of his temerity. Arsaces, however, so little fears the boaster that, defiantly, he threatens to repair at once to the palace and to seek there the idol of his soul. Assurus would then intimidate the valiant lover by declaring if at the palace he appear he there shall see "perhaps thy king." But Arsaces answers him fearlessly, of a courage born of his loyal intentions:

"Reign thou perhaps may, one day,
But king o'er me thou ne'er shalt be."

The interview is brought to a conclusion by Assurus declaring that Azema is betrothed to him, and that he goes now to the palace to prepare himself for conquest, joy and splendor, which shall be his this day.



Scene VII is often omitted from the representation, not being essential to the plot of the opera. In an ante-room of the palace Azema and Idrenus are seen, the latter importuning the fair princess to favor his avowals of love. Azema gives him no better answer than that Semiramis has the disposal of her hand. Pressed for confession of her choice, Azema declares to him that his suspicion of her love for Assurus is unworthy, since so vile a man cannot beguile her heart, but she refuses to lend encouragement to the passionate suit of Idrenus, who exits vowing his devotion.

Scene VIII shows a charming garden, in which Semiramis is seated, attended by maids who strive by song and divertisement to assuage her melancholy, but naught avails to relieve her pensiveness until the chorus proclaims :

" Arsaces is returned,
And him you'll soon behold ;
Then all around will breathe
Rapturous joy and love."

Whereat Semiramis, unable to restrain the delights of her soul over fond anticipations, expresses her rapturous emotions in a cavatina, " At length a brilliant ray," following with an air, " Oh, thought enchanting !"

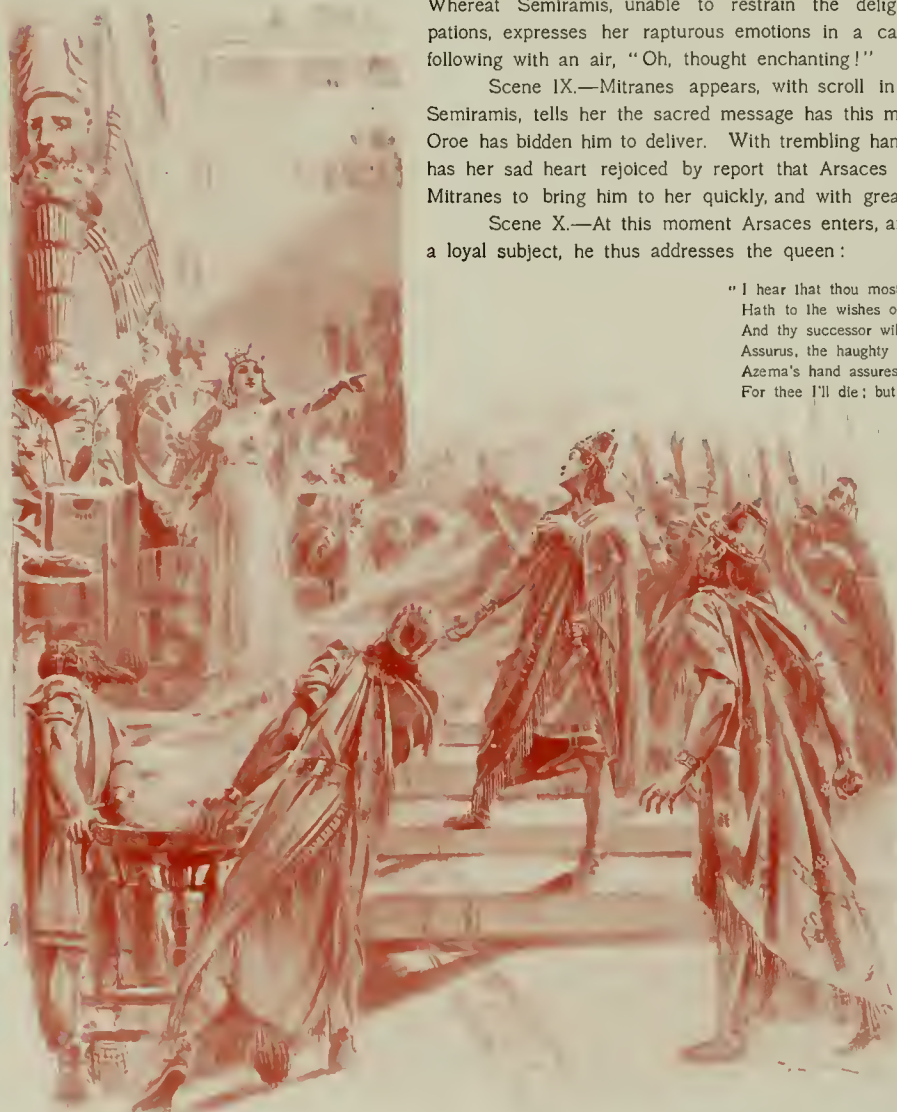
Scene IX.—Mitrane appears, with scroll in hand, who to the eager inquiry of Semiramis, tells her the sacred message has this moment arrived from Memphis, which Oroë has bidden him to deliver. With trembling hands Semiramis unrolls the scroll and has her sad heart rejoiced by report that Arsaces has returned, at which she orders Mitrane to bring him to her quickly, and with greatest pomp the nuptial rites prepare.

Scene X.—At this moment Arsaces enters, and with such deference as becomes a loyal subject, he thus addresses the queen :

" I hear that thou most kindly
Hath to the wishes of Assyria yielded,
And thy successor wilt this day name.
Assurus, the haughty Assurus, proclaims himself king ;
Azema's hand assures him of the throne.
For thee I'll die ; but him I'll never serve !"

Semiramis calms his fears by telling him Azema may not be wife of Assurus, and almost betrays her passion by the warmth of her admiration for his devoted services, while Arsaces, declaring his loyal devotion of heart, and sword, and life, inspires in Semiramis belief that it is not loyalty alone, but heart affection for her as woman, more than queen. Arsaces has no thought that Semiramis has formed a passion for him, and his loving words are utterances of his feelings for Azema, but the queen does not so interpret them. The two conclude their interview with a charming duet, " To visions most delightful," which is the favorite number of the opera.

Scene XI represents a magnificent hall in the palace, opening upon a spacious court, with a view of Babylon and the Tower



" Let him tremble ! I know how—
Behold him !"

SEMIRAMIDE.

of Babel in the distance. On the right is the splendid throne and on the left the great stone mausoleum of Ninus. The action of the scene begins with a procession of royal guards, followed by Oroë and priests bearing the sacred altar; then Idrenus, Assurus and Arsaces; next following, Semiramis, Azema and Mitranes, attended by slaves, upon which imposing scene numerous people in the background gaze with mingled awe and pleasure. The chorus renders a song of hail and joyful acclamation, and the Magi recite petitions to the gods, during which Semiramis takes her seat upon the throne and announces the purpose of the convocation.

When the princes, officers, and Magi have made their vows of loyalty, Semiramis proclaims that Arsaces deserves her highest favor, and has by her been chosen consort and king! Cries of fury are uttered by Assurus, of surprise by Arsaces, and of praise by the assemblage. Idrenus seizes the occasion to beseech Semiramis that he may wed Azema, to which the queen consents; thereupon Arsaces, unable to control his feelings, protests that the throne is not the prize which his bursting heart has coveted; but his voice is hushed in the commotion which ensues, for as the priests advance to the altar a mysterious sound is heard, a muffled thunder followed by groans from the tomb, which fills the assemblage with terror. A moment later the stone door of the

great sepulchre swings open, and the apparition of the dead king strides forth! A dreadful fright seizes the people, but Semiramis makes bold to question the august shade, and to ask pronouncement of the destiny that awaits the nation. The ghost of Ninus answers in doleful voice, disclosing that Arsaces shall reign, but bidding him first descend into the royal sepulchre, there to offer a victim to the murdered king, and to obey the priestly counsel.

Arsaces betrays no fear at the ghostly summons, and announces his readiness to obey, but implores to know what victim he shall offer to appease the spirit's will? To this request the apparition makes no answer, and slowly recedes. Semiramis, in greatest agitation, appeals to the shade that she may be permitted to follow to his sepulchre, but the spectre waves her back: "My ashes respect! When the gods shall will it, then will I claim thee!"

Semiramis is overcome with fear at the omen of evil destiny, and falls fainting in Azema's arms as the spirit of Ninus disappears within the tomb; which woeful scene, that overwhelms Semiramis and Assurus with remorse, and an agony of fear lest their damnable crime be exposed, concludes Act I.

Act II, Scene I.—An ante-room of the palace is shown, into which enter Mitranes, with royal guards, who commands Arbates, a faithful follower, to keep vigilant watch upon Assurus, whose direful schemes must be circumvented.

The next moment (Scene II), Semiramis comes upon the scene and inquires if he has discovered what villainy Assurus has concerted, but before time is given Mitranes to answer, Assurus enters (Scene III), at which all withdraw except Semiramis, leaving the two alone. He is bold to accuse the queen of neglect to requite his faith and services, though at times nourishing his hope of just reward. Angrily and imperiously she reproaches him for reminding her of his guilty service, when even now they may be watched by the invisible spirit of Ninus, "Thy king whom thou treacherously



"Yes, vengeance! now give it me!
Oh, weapon, sacred of my good sire!"



² "No, I will not leave thee! In vain
Thou try'st to fly me, thankless one!"

murdered!" "Ah! even so," answers he vindictively, "but who mixed the poison? who the fatal draught prepared?" Semiramis is stung to deepest anger by his accusings, and calls Assurus traitor, who by vilest arts did seduce her from her wifely vows, and now a husband slain, a son of dearest hope has likewise perished, perhaps by the hand that slew his father! Fiercely she repels him from her presence, as traitor whose sight to her she can no longer endure. Assurus reminds her that even though a mighty queen, 'twas she who urged the guilty deed, and that one word from him might tear her from the throne and honor; and when she answers that Arsaces will protect her, he scornfully bids her search her heart, recall the night of fearsome death, the horrid phantom of a husband slain, and think how great must be the vengeance of the gods to punish such a dastard crime.

Semiramis recoils before this picture of her murderous guilt, but strains of festive music from the palace remind her that the ceremonies of selecting a new consort have begun, and triumphantly she admonishes Assurus that the moment of his downfall is near at hand—when vengeance will be accomplished.

Scene IV.—The scene which follows represents the interior of the sanctuary, the Assyrian Holy of Holies, to which Oroë enters, followed by Arsaces, accompanied by Magi who pronounce: "In this most solemn and mysterious fane," etc. Arsaces resignedly awaits the oracular interpretation of his destiny, which Oroë delivers by investing him with a crown, to which action he protests that Ninus lives, the shade of Ninus having so declared, and therefore only Ninus may rightly wear such emblem of royalty. Oroë now withdraws the mysterious veil, and reveals that he, Arsaces, is the long-lost Ninus, son of the king, and hence the legal heir to Babylon's throne. Eagerly he asks who his mother may be, and learns that it is Semiramis, whom Oroë calls the impious one. Arsaces resents the use of so harsh a word against his mother, whereupon Oroë hands him a scroll, which the Memphian oracle has declared, and reads this horrent revelation:

"Ninus, expiring, to his faithful Phrdates:—
'I die by poison—from such-like danger save
Ninus, my most dear son.
That he hereafter may my death avenge
Assurus was the traitor, my perfidious spouse—'"

Arsaces (Ninus) can read no more, overpowered with disgrace and sorrow for his mother's guilt, and with fury at the traitorous assassin, who to his crime adds the shame of disputing for the heart of Azema. Oroë now bids him wreak the vengeance which the oracle has commanded, in fulfillment of which Arsaces seizes the sword which his father has wielded and vows to punish with a deserving death the violator of his mother's honor and the slayer of the king. But of his mother! He hesitates to lift a hand against her, she who has given him to the world:

"Ah, she is my mother!
By my tears to mercy led.
My father yet may pardon her!"

Scene V.—In the succeeding action Semiramis and Arsaces are alone, she, caressing of speech, reproving his disposition to reject her favors, and persuading him to accept at her hand the crown of Assyria, be consort of a queen, and triumph over the hateful Assurus. In impetuous tones he declares his purpose to slay the guilty regicide, to kill Assurus, whose crime to expiate will avenge the murdered Ninus! At these words, which betray that her guilt has been discovered, Semiramis startles with awful dread, and calls Arsaces husband! whose



"Well! 'Tis for thee to strike!
The decrees of the gods fulfill!"

SEMIRAMIDE.

protection she may claim. He exhibits intense worriment and confusion, and takes the scroll from his bosom, that from it some mysterious help may be gained to aid him in his perplexity. Seeing the paper, which he would fain conceal, Semiramis demands to know its contents which he is unwilling to communicate, but insistent she takes it from his reluctant hand and despite his protests reads the revelation of her crime, thereby learning that Arsaces is Ninus, her son, whom she believed long dead.

After a pause, of bitter contemplation, Semiramis orders Arsaces to execute the dead king's command, the gods' decrees to punish the guilty mother, and avenge the murdered father; but he refuses to perform a deed so awful, protesting that though the crime were great, hateful in the sight of heaven, "Yet still thou art my mother!" Anguished, she begs him to slay her, that she may be rid of her hateful self, and exhibits such remorse that Arsaces weeps with compassion, and when she manifests contrition and appreciation of his sympathy he embraces her with transport, and their conflicting emotions they express in a plaintive duet, "Dark day of horror"

Arsaces at length tears himself from his mother's arms, and to her pleadings he declares his purpose to seek his father's tomb, and at the spirit's will to glut his vengeance for the foul murder.

Scene VI shows a remote part of the palace, contiguous to the mausoleum of Ninus. Assurus enters, pensively reflecting upon his situation, and how he may destroy Arsaces, his rival. To accomplish this murderous purpose he resolves to descend into the royal tomb, which he has learned Arsaces will visit in obedience to the oracle, there to offer a victim, as the shade of Ninus has commanded, and with hope to surprise Arsaces, slay him in the darkness.

Scene VII reveals Assurus in the presence of many satraps, who advise him that it is folly upon his part to aspire to the throne, since the oracle has declared that on the morrow a Scythian shall be chosen king. Assurus disregards the counsel of his friends, and by a secret passage he enters the tomb, but at the threshold is arrested by sight of a preternatural object which, upon closer inspection, discovers to his terror-stricken soul the shade of Ninus brandishing a sword and threatening him with a punishment he so much deserves. Assurus tries to persuade himself that the vision is a dream, and when it vanishes he goes into the sepulchre.

Scene VIII.—Mitrane, Arbates, and guards enter, and learning that Assurus has profaned the tomb by obtruding his guilty presence therein, they prepare to apprehend him, and to report the violation of the sepulchre to the queen.

Scene IX.—The chorus declare the impiety of the traitor who violates the emperor's tomb, and demand his death, a sentence which attending priests confirm, after which they disperse and conceal themselves among the vaults. Thereupon enter Oroë and Arsaces, the latter advancing with hesitation and expressing fears that some dreadful happening is at hand, a presage horrible, that sends a shuddering chill coursing through his veins. Oroë bids him be resolute, for the eventful moment has arrived when he shall strike for vengeance. Arsaces draws his sword, and asking



"Father, honor'd,
Thine avenging now behold!"

whom the victim shall be, is told that the gods will lead him hither. As Arsaces is groping among the tombs, Assurus presents himself upon the opposite side, seeking his rival, the darkness presently enveloping the two.

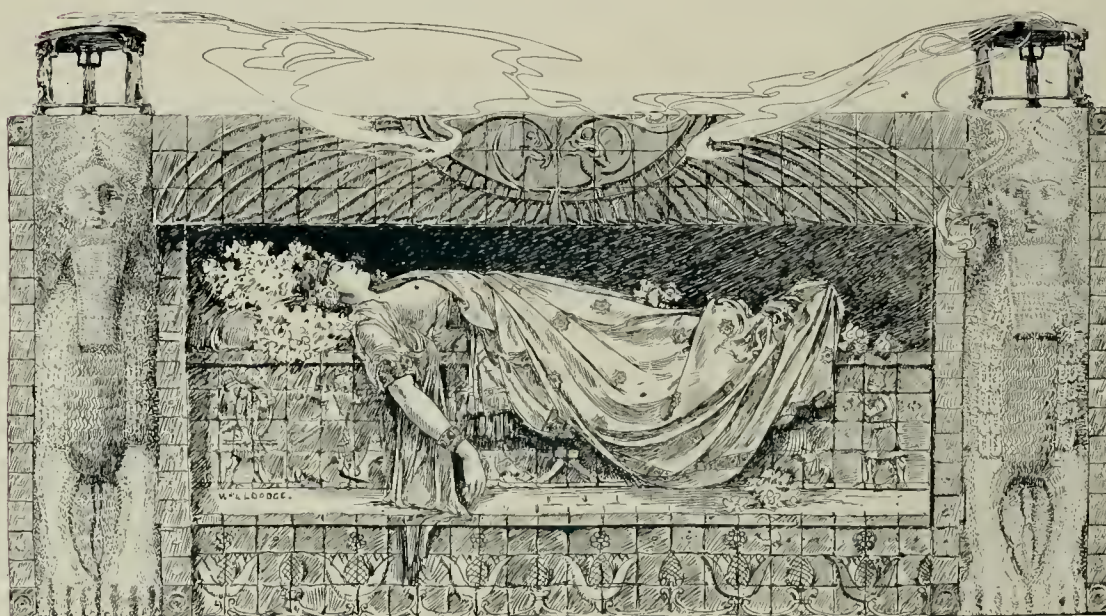
Scene X.—Semiramis now appears, and advancing she kneels before the tomb of Ninus, where she thus expresses her contrition in words of woe and confessions of awful fear that guilt is about to receive its punishment:

"Already the monster do I hear,
Among these dismal tombs concealed,
His victim he awaits,—but dauntless is
The hand of a mother! Oh, thou, whom
No longer a husband I dare call,
The tears of a desolate heart receive!"

At this juncture Arsaces approaches, who hearing his mother's voice, fancies it is his father's spirit speaking, not being able to distinguish the kneeling form in the uncertain light. The three move about in the darkness until, drawing together, Oroë in a solemn tone from behind a tomb bids Arsaces strike, at which instant Assurus stands revealed, haughty and defiant. Arsaces quickly flashes his sword and launches at the traitor assassin, but Semiramis rushes between, and receives the death thrust in her bosom. Oroë calls the guards who, obedient to his command, seize Assurus, whose rage is boundless when he is told by Oroë that Arsaces, his rival, is none other than Ninus, his king, who will now swift punishment and dire render for the murder of his father. As Assurus is dragged away by the guards he gloatingly answers Arsaces' inquiry, "Whom, then, have I slain; whose blood is this?" by pointing to the prostrate form of Semiramis, saying, "Behold, wretched man, thy mother!"

When Arsaces discovers that it is indeed his mother whom his sword has stricken, he cries in deepest anguish against the cruelty of the gods who would suffer him to commit such a deed, and strives to turn the weapon upon himself, but is prevented by Oroë, and the scene closes with an acclamation by the chorus:

"Come, Arsaces, in triumph the throne ascend;
Needless grief from thy soul dispel;
The will of heaven thou hast accomplished,
And now will Syria rejoice with thee."







Manon

"AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING BY WILLIAM DE LEFTWICH DODGE."

MANON (with tears)—"*Oh ' pardon me ! I die here at thy feet !
Give back thy dear love or despairing I perish !*"

ACT III.—SCENE III

MANON.

MUSIC BY MASSENET.—WORDS BY MEILHAC AND GILLE.



MANON LESCAUT, Abbe Prevost's (Antoine Francois, 1697-1763) sadly beautiful romance, was first operatically treated by Auber, but though the famous maestro's composition was not without merit, it had few representations and was never revived by him, though for a long while he entertained a purpose to rewrite it. Few stories have had such a pathetic background, and none has ever been more sweetly told than that upon which Prevost's reputation as a novelist remains firmly established. It has been read and cried over by multitudes for more than a century, and for years to come the tale will bring thousands of others to weep and mourn the melancholy end of the girl who, once rioting in luxury, died upon the sands of a desert shore, and was laid in a shallow grave scooped out by the fingers of a sorrowing and self-exiled lover.

Massenet is to music what Tom Moore was to poetry, both being exponents of the tender passion, which they invest with a richness of imagination, and interpret with a dreamy fascination, that is the very soul of romance. "The King of Lahore" has about it the splendid orientalism of Moore's "Lalla Rookh," and "Manon" is suggestive in sentiment of not a few of the elegiac poems of the sweet singer of Ireland. The story of "Manon" appeals with special force to the temperament of Massenet, and his lyrical rendering accordingly represents his most graceful efforts at musical interpretation, for which an applauding world is his reward as it is his debtor.

In Prevost's beautiful tale, Chevalier des Grieux is a conspicuous example of the evil adage, "All for love, and the world well lost," while of the heroine's cousin it may be said, he was a coarse braggart and a vile Bohemian. But of Manon Lescaut; ah, it is she who is the most difficult to define, possessing, as she is represented to do, all the good and bad of womankind. Animated by a strong affection for her lover, yet her incurable love of splendor and luxury compelled a violation of her heart's impulses. Preferring Des Grieux to all others, yet she does not hesitate to practice perfidies towards him when her pleasures so invite; but with all her vagaries and vicissitudes she is amiable and natural in her degradation, even while emphasizing the moral of her shame. Without literary ancestress, Manon sprang from the imagination, stimulated by sympathetic observations, of the novelist, but by whatever rules we measure her character she remains still one of the most remarkable heroines of fiction.

The action of the story occurs in the year 1721, and may be briefly followed thus: A party of gay friends are making merry at an inn in Amiens when Manon, a peasant, but very beautiful maid, arrives, escorted by her cousin, Lescaut, of the Guards. She is on her way to a convent whither her parents have sent her, but has so little piety in her nature, and withal is so ambitious of the world, that she is readily approachable to the advances of Chevalier des Grieux, who though about to take priestly orders, cannot withstand her fascinations. A short interview results in a mutual admiration that prompts them to seize a favorable moment to elope, and the pair take apartments in Paris, where they live happily for a while, the chevalier in the meantime seeking consent of his father to marry the girl. Lescaut, and De Bretigny, a base nobleman, cause the pair



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"Heavens! What do I see! Young lady! Really,
My head is turning round!"

much trouble and so compromise Des Grieux that at his father's instigation he is arrested, really to force a separation from Manon, who is then taken under the protection of De Bretigny. Manon presently learns that Des Grieux, whom she passionately loves, has become a priest at St. Sulpice, whereupon she quits De Bretigny and flies to her lover. The meeting between the two is intensely dramatic, as she pleads with Des Grieux to renounce the priesthood and enter with her upon a life of gayety. Her persuasion is effective and together the two pursue a course of such guilty pleasures that an evil end is inevitable. Des Grieux is induced to play at cards by his old enemy, who unjustly accuses him of cheating and being in a position of power orders his arrest, but the chevalier's father appears opportunely, and prevents such disgrace. Manon, however, is not suffered to escape the revenge of one Guillot, whose attentions she has repulsed. Through his influence she is condemned to transportation. The story, as operatically treated by Massenet, concludes with a meeting between Des Grieux and Manon on a highway near Havre, he having followed her guards to take a final leave of her. Overcome by remorse for her perfidies, and by anticipation of her fate in a foreign land, her heart breaks with grief and she expires in his arms.

The conclusion of Prevost's tale is much more pathetic than that of the opera, but the difficulties attending its lyrical treatment, and length of the action, are sufficient reasons for the omission of that part which describes the vicissitudes of the lovers in Louisiana, to which place of banishment Des Grieux has devotedly followed her. Protecting Manon from the persistent attentions of the governor's son, who would marry her, Des Grieux wounds him in a duel and then flees, accompanied by Manon. The two wander through the desolate wastes of Louisiana until the famished girl sinks upon the sand and dies of exhaustion. The bereft lover scoops out a grave with his hands and gives poor Manon burial, after which, with broken heart, he returns to France to crave pardon of his father and to tell his tale of sorrowful love to all who will hear it.

Act I, Scene I.—The opening scene of the opera represents a gay party of friends before an inn at Amiens, those present being three actresses, Guillot, who is minister of finance, and De Bretigny, a nobleman, all of whom shout noisily and impatiently to the inn-keeper to serve them. Soon a bell is heard which announces the approach of a diligence, and a troop of townspeople appear, singing: "Hark! hark! the hour is sounding; see the coach the corner rounding," etc.

As the coach stops Lescaut alights, and receiving favorable reply to his inquiry as to this being a stopping place of the coach from Arras, tells the guard to satisfy their thirst at a wine shop while he waits the coming of his cousin (Manon). As the guards disappear, the Arras diligence arrives, and a busy scene ensues, of porters, servants, travelers separating their parcels and giving many orders, to the confusion of everybody. Out of this turmoil Manon emerges and stands in mute astonishment, not knowing whither to turn, until Lescaut approaches and announces himself as her cousin. Though never having seen him before, Manon, with rustic simplicity, asks him to kiss her, thinking it a cousinly thing to do, which service he joyfully performs with many comments on her beauty.

Manon, with expression, renders a pretty recitative, confessing her awkwardness, and telling the sensations which she has experienced on this her first trip from home, at the conclusion of which the bell rings for the coach to depart. After much complaint the travelers take their places and drive away, followed by disappearance of the townspeople,

leaving Lescaut and Manon alone. Lescaut goes out a moment, to find Manon's baggage, during which interval Guillot appears on a balcony of the inn and shouts for more wine, but on the moment observing Manon, he hems, and otherwise shows confusion, declaring that his head is turned by such beauty, and finally blurts out to her:

"Young lady, I am Guillot de Morfontaine. If you desire to hear more, know then that I am not only rich but that I love you and will be glad to hear what you have to say." Manon replies that she would be ashamed, if she was less disposed to laugh at such a declaration. At this moment De Bretigny comes out of



DEATH OF MANON

the inn, followed by three actresses, who make sport of Guillot's infatuation, but he is not to be persuaded in such manner from his endeavors to win Manon's favors, and tells her that a postilion is coming directly which when he appears she may know he is at her service.

Lescaut returns in time to hear Guillot's proposal, and boisterously asks what he has spoken, but is meekly answered, and when Guillot retires, laughed at by his companions, Lescaut addresses Manon reassuringly. Two of the guardsmen call him to join them in a game of cards, but before he goes he gives Manon some good counsel, exhorting her to be prudent for the honor of the family.

When Lescaut goes out, Manon soliloquizes, in her simplicity, of the dreams of splendor which have beguiled her but which she must now banish. Even as she resolves to think no more of such ambitions she perceives the three actresses seated on a pavilion of the inn, and marks the beautiful dresses and the rich gems with which they are bedecked, but, sadly, she promises to resign all hope of gaining such glories, and to leave her golden wishes at the convent gate. On the instant, however, her spirit of resignation deserts her, and her longings are renewed, for strive as she will against pride of flesh, the desire remains to revel in splendors which wealth affords, vainly imagining that those women are happiest who spend their lives in pursuit of pleasure.

While Manon is alone, engrossed in sad reflections upon her lot, Des Grieux enters, telling of his joy at a promised meeting with his father on the morrow, when suddenly his pleasant anticipations are interrupted by a sight of Manon, whose fresh maiden beauty immediately enthalls him beyond all power to resist. He advances slowly towards her, drawn by an all-masterful fascination, and there follows one of the sweetest duets of the whole opera; he with emotion pouring out his love upon her, the mistress of his heart; and she, in simplicity, receiving his declarations as music to her ears. When their mutual love has thus been expressed, a postilion appears, the same whom Guillot has ordered to obey the commands of Manon, whereupon she seizes upon the opportunity to be revenged upon the old roue, and boldly suggests to Des Grieux that they take the coach and flee to Paris,

"And with love's sweetest flowers
Will we crown the bright hours."

Des Grieux is made intensely happy by the proposal, and tenderly promises that soon her name shall be joined with his. Immediately the purpose of the two lovers is become fixed to elope, peals of laughter greet their startled ears from the pavilion, which, as Manon explains, proceed from three beautiful ladies, at which juncture the voice of Lescaut is

heard within, speaking to his comrades, "I shall expect you both at the wine shop this evening." At this sound Des Grieux becomes alarmed, and being told by Manon that it is her cousin, he begs her to come away at once. With some excitement she hears the three actresses calling to Guillot, whereupon expressing the belief that happiness can be attained by abandoning sorrow and giving all thought to pleasure, the two hastily retire just as Lescaut returns upon the scene, in an intoxicated condition, looking for Manon. As he calls her name without receiving reply, Lescaut perceives Guillot coming out of the pavilion and accuses him of having taken her away. A crowd of



W. L. DODGE

"Pardon me. I see you for the first time,
Yet my heart recognizes you!"



"Yes, I looked over your shoulder and saw you write my name."

townspeople enter at the same time, and this noisy accusation, which Lescaut repeats, greatly embarrasses Guillot, whose protestations serve only to bring upon him the suspicion of the people, and the inn-keeper, who demand that he explain what has been done with the girl.

While this babble of accusation is proceeding, the noise of a retreating carriage attracts the attention of the townspeople, who hastily conclude that Manon is being thus spirited away by Guillot's postilion, and Lescaut seizing the trembling old roue threatens to chastise him. De Bretigny now enters with the ladies, who add their ridicule of his unfortunate love-making to increase Guillot's discomfiture, until, stung to madness by his embarrassing situation, he promises to have his revenge upon the perfidious girl, and upon Lescaut as well. In chorus all sing:

"Ah, the bird has flown!
Was ever such misfortune known!"

which climax furnishes the concluding scene of the first act.

The second act begins with a scene showing an apartment in the Rue Vivienne, Paris, in which Des Grieux is seen at a desk writing, with Manon softly approaching from behind to discover what he has written. He is diverted by her foot-steps, and turning about reproaches her for her indiscretion, to which she answers with a show of curiosity, "Yes, I looked over your shoulder, and with a smile saw you write my name." Des Grieux thereupon tells her he is about to send a letter to his father, confessing his passion, but trembles with fear lest it provoke him to anger. At her request for permission to do so, Manon reads the letter thus:

"She is called Manon, and is so young and fair that in her all charms of womankind unite. She is possessed of grace, of radiant youth and wondrous beauty, while her voice is like sweetest music, and in her eyes shines the tender light of love."

Manon pauses to archly ask if he really feels such sentiments, and giving assurances of his ardent admiration, Des Grieux takes the letter from her and reads:

"Like the passenger bird that on speeding wing ever seeks the land of spring, so her young soul to life is always open. Her lips are like roses, that blush and bow to the zephyrs, imparting fragrant kisses as they pass, and softly luring the breezes to abide."

Manon, with great elation, asks Des Grieux if he believes his father will give consent to their marriage, and when he dismisses doubt of such happy permission she invites him to embrace her, and then post the letter. As he moves towards the door, he pauses suddenly to pettishly inquire who gave her the flowers which she wears in her corsage. Perceiving his disposition to be jealous on small occasion, she coyly tells him they were thrown into her window, and being pretty she thought to keep them, but that her heart belongs to him alone.

A noise is heard below, and a servant enters to inform them that two gardes-du-corps are below, one of whom calls himself a relation. Manon's fears are excited that Lescaut has pursued them, which are confirmed directly by the entrance of Lescaut and De Bretigny. The former brusquely announces: "At last, my pretty pair, I have found you!" After which he addresses Des Grieux as a precious rascal, and to the latter's caution to use softer words he answers with a declaration that he has come to seek redress, to avenge the honor of the Lescaut house! De Bretigny begs him be calm, but he grows more insolent until Des Grieux, in firm manner, promises to pay his insult with a thrashing. The swashbuckler is amazed by Des Grieux's threat, but shows his craven spirit by bidding De Bretigny hold him back lest he do some fearful thing. Manon is much alarmed by such threatening speech, and begs protection; though more

anxious for her lover, she confesses that it is she who is the guilty one. Des Grieux seeks to calm her anxieties, by assuring her of his purpose to defend her, taking upon himself all blame for what has been done, and announcing his readiness to assume responsibility. This defiant attitude of one whom he hoped to intimidate, causes Lescaut to abate his swagger and assume a compromising air, and thus with deference he addresses Des Grieux, saying: "Good sir, I have no wish to quarrel. This lady is my cousin, and I come quite politely to ask you if your purpose is to wed Manon." De Bretigny interposes to restore harmony between the two, and so well succeeds that Des Grieux laughingly tells him all his anger has been dissipated by such pleasing frankness, and becomes so confiding as to hand the unsealed

letter, which he has written to his father, to Lescaut to read. The two withdraw a pace from Manon, who advances towards De Bretigny and asks him why he has come here in the disguise of a garde-du-corps, to seek the man whom she loves? He thereupon tells her that his purpose is to give warning, in his own person, that this night Des Grieux will be arrested and separated from her by the order of his father, and that poverty will become her portion. Manon, with surprise and emotion, declares it shall not be done, that she will warn him.

De Bretigny implores against such rashness, which can avail nothing, but rather to listen to his counsel and all shall be well for her. Torn by doubt and fear, she pauses to ask herself: "Dare I listen?" which indecision De Bretigny takes advantage of to win her consent to his purposes by promising that she shall full soon become a queen, reigning in beauty's right. Lescaut and Des Grieux are now heard reading and commenting upon the letter, and the former having received Des Grieux's pledges to make Manon his wife, professes that the business upon which he has come is finished, and he now retires with De Bretigny.

Manon stands a moment in sad distraction, halting in her opinion as to whether it is better to accept poverty and be true to her lover, or surrender love for the splendors which De Bretigny has promised. Des Grieux is so beside himself with joy that he fails to observe Manon's contemplative mood, and discovery of her conflicting emotions is prevented by the entrance of a servant who lays a cloth for supper.

Des Grieux remembers that he has not sent the letter, and, mentioning the fact, is bidden by Manon to do so at once, but, as if suspiciously, he asks her if she really loves him, and receiving her assurance, he answers: "If you be true, you must promise me—" but he declines to finish the sentence, and goes out with the letter. When Des Grieux withdraws, Manon, much moved, soliloquizes of her situation, striving with the temptation that has beset her, hesitating between her affections and her ambitions, a conflict between heart and brain, until she weeps for a love that cannot compass her longings. Pityingly she considers the joy which she has found in the companionship of one loving and beloved, the tender ministrations, the sweet transports, and ardent manifestations that have made their little home an Eden whence all of sorrow has been expelled. But through her tears she sees a vision of poverty, of shattered ambitions, a fatal awakening from her dearest reveries, the sunset of her hopes.

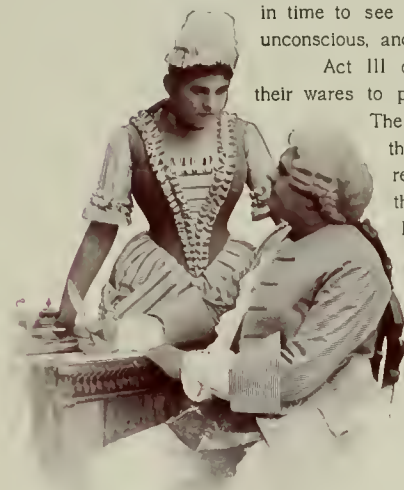
While weeping and thus contemplative, Manon is startled by the footsteps of Des Grieux, who enters to find her trembling and in tears. He tries his arts of encouragement to quicken her pleasure, speaking words of consolation and making vows of love, but she cannot dismiss her distress at the fear of his arrest. Unable to dispel her anxiety by assurances, Des Grieux sings of a day-dream he has had:

"With fancy's eyes I saw, Manon,
A sweet and lowly cot," etc.

"At last, my pretty pair, I have found you!"



The song is interrupted by a knock at the door, and Des Grieux arises to answer it, but Manon clings to him and begs he will not go, anticipating that it is a summons for his arrest; but despite her pleadings he disengages himself from her arms and passes out. A moment after the noise of a struggle is heard outside, and Manon runs to the window in time to see her lover taken away by the law officers. With a shriek, "He is gone!" she falls unconscious, and the curtain descends.



Act III opens with a fête day in the Queen's promenade, showing stalls of traders who offer their wares to passers-by, and a pavilion where gay persons are dancing, and otherwise making merry.

The three actresses appear who meet two young men in the crowd, and speak banteringly of their escapades with Guillot, until Lescaut is seen approaching, whereupon two of the girls retire, leaving their companion, Rosette, to receive him. The traders solicit him to buy of the gew-gaws they offer, and he makes selection of many articles which he presents to Rosette with much sentimental praise of her worth and beauty, concluding his laudation by the tender of a jewel for a kiss. The other two actresses now return and are surprised by the sudden appearance of Guillot, who utters a tirade against the faithlessness of women and confounds the actresses for having abandoned him, after believing he had fascinated the three. De Bretigny hears Guillot's raillery and ironically remarks: "I beg you will not take Manon from me." Whereat Guillot answers him: "There, that's enough of such jesting. By the bye, Bretigny, I have been told that you refused Manon's request to engage a ballet for a performance to be given at her house." "Yes; it is quite true," De Bretigny replies, with unconcern, at which Guillot rubs his hands with satisfaction and goes out with a resolve to steal Manon. The crowd now return, singing of great ladies who gain men's hearts and reign by beauty, followed by Manon, upon whom De Bretigny lavishes much flattery. She is vain of her charms and gaily sings:

"An empress am I, in my way,
I conquer where'er I am seen," etc.:

Do you think your father will give his consent?"

which brings forth cries of "Bravo! bravo!" from the throng, and when she goes to the stalls to select some trinkets, they follow singing, "Great ladies of renown," etc. The Count Des Grieux, father of the chevalier, enters and recognizing De Bretigny, tells him that his visit to Paris concerns his son, who is no longer to be called chevalier, for he has entered the Seminary of St. Sulpice. With a smile, De Bretigny expresses his astonishment at such a change, to which the count, also smiling, answers: "You caused it yourself by coming between him and his love." De Bretigny requests the count to speak in lower tones, as Manon may overhear. Dance music is heard in the distance, and Manon approaches towards the two gentlemen. Thus seeing her for the first time, the count is astonished by her beauty, but turns aside as he perceives that she wishes to speak to De Bretigny. Manon shows her new lover a bracelet, a duplicate of which she much desires to find, and De Bretigny gallantly offers to aid her in the search. But instead of going she employs a pretext to address the count, and with arch frankness tells him she has, though without intention, overheard his conversation, but craving pardon, she remarks: "I think the chevalier was one time in love with a friend of mine." "Ah, indeed," the count replies stiffly. With much emotion, manifesting the fears that disturb her, she continues: "Yes, he loved, and I long to know if forgetting her who has caused him so much suffering, he has dismissed remembrance from his heart of all which might have been."

The count, with some sarcasm in his tones, asks if she knows where summer flies, or whither goes the scent of roses; but since ignorance is bliss, it were better to forget the past. Manon's anxiety refuses to be foiled by the count's irony, and she eagerly inquires to know if the chevalier has grieved for his lost love, or has ever since spoke her name. The count gazes at her steadily, and gives the poor satisfaction of confessing that in silence his son for a while did languish, but that his once heavy heart has become light again. After thus wounding Manon by sharpest arrow, he salutes her and retires. The people once more enter, among whom are De Bretigny, Guillot and Lescaut, as Manon, distracted by grief, speaks to herself: "No! his life is bound up in mine. It is not possible that he has cast me out of his remembrance." Then, recalling her situation, she asks Lescaut to give her a chair, for she is faint with sorrow. Lescaut is somewhat alarmed at her appearance,



"Let me take my letter!"

and solicitously inquires: "Where may I take you, cousin?" to which she resolutely replies: "To St. Sulpice!" Lescaut is astounded by such a request, and hoping that her desire is but a passing fancy, begs pardon for asking: "Where will my cousin go?" whereat she repeats in a tone of determination: "To St. Sulpice!" whereupon all exit.

Scene II represents a parlor of the seminary of St. Sulpice, in which are several ladies, some of whom are heard complimenting the ministerial abilities of Des Grieux, the priest, whose eloquence they declare is so divine as to be a sign of heaven, a most perfect saint. The count (father of the Chevalier Des Grieux) enters unobserved, and hears with pleasure these complimentary remarks about his son, who immediately after comes into the parlor habited in priestly garb, and receives his father's congratulations as the ladies take their leave. Des Grieux is downcast with melancholy, and declares that the world has come to contain for him only bitterness and disappointment. The count attempts to arouse him from his despair by suggesting that he wed some maiden tender and fair, one

who is worthy of his ancient family, and thus obedient to Heaven's laws, meet the world with fearless face But Des Grieux cannot be consoled, and tearfully declares his resolve to take vows; to devote his life to the Church. The count flippantly tells him that such being his determination, he will announce to all that there is now a saint in the Des Grieux family, but doubts if any one will believe so strange a thing. Des Grieux begs his father not to make sport of his mental sufferings, which have driven him to seek solace in renunciation of the world's vanities; at which the count, to test his sincerity of purpose, tells him: "As it is possible you may be an abbot to-morrow, I shall send you at once one hundred thousand francs, the same being a present from your mother. And now, farewell, my son! Remain to pray"

When his father has departed, leaving him alone, Des Grieux contemplates his condition, and creates fresh resolves to seek that rest which faith in Heaven only can give. He dismisses the image of her who, so sweet and lovely, has brought him to misfortune, and calls God to purge his soul, and to disperse the gloom that weighs upon his heart. Thus voicing his innermost thoughts, Des Grieux slowly passes out as Manon enters, preceded by the porter of the seminary, to whom she gives a purse of money and requests an audience with the Abbe Des Grieux. When she is left alone, Manon looks about her and expresses a fear that under the influence of this holy place Des Grieux may have expelled her from his heart, and even cursed the day of their meeting. While thus absorbed in gloomy anticipation she hears a chorus in the adjoining chapel chanting their prayers, under which sacred prompting she falls upon her knees and addresses to Heaven her petition, not for pardon of her offences, but that she may be reunited with her lover.

Des Grieux enters, whose footfalls arouse her, and perceiving that it is he, Manon is about to fall, but recovers herself. He angrily, and scornfully, bids her begone, as one whose presence is a sacrilege to such a place, but sorrowfully she pleads for compassion; confessing how she has wronged him, yet prays his



"Your pardon, pray, I was here quite close by!"

pardon for sake of the love she professes. The interview is painfully pathetic and prolonged. She, resolved to win back his heart against all his holy resolutions, against his anger at her offending, gives this reply to his declaration that all his love is dead:

"No, no; love cannot die. It is as imperishable as the soul (*caressingly*). Is it not my hand that presses thine; my voice that you so loved to hear, my eyes that beam with love though drowned with tears? Look upon me, am I not Manon? I love thee." Against this impassioned pleading

Des Grieux still steels his heart, and when a bell is heard calling to prayer he would turn away to perform his priestly duties, but she restrains him, declaring that they shall never part, and so entreats, caresses, and pledges, that, overcome at last by her utterances, Des Grieux is unable longer to repress the emotions of his heart, and, renouncing his vows, abjuring his duties, he passionately exclaims:

"Ah, Manon, no longer will I struggle with myself. For thy sake I will dare the vengeance even of Heaven. My life is in your eyes, my joy is in your caresses. Come, Manon, I love you." With a cry of intense joy over her triumph Manon falls upon her lover's bosom as one who has regained Eden, which beautiful and powerful climax ends the third act.

Act IV begins with a scene in a high-class gambling room of Paris, whither are gathered Lescaut, several professionals, and the three actresses. The croupier—keeper of the gaming table—invites the gentlemen to play, who begin, but on the first dealing of the cards a dispute arises between Lescaut and one of the professionals, which, however, is settled, and on the next deal Lescaut is winner of a round sum which he triumphantly pockets as the girls crowd about him singing: "This charming place of pleasure." He in turn sings with vigor a praise to one whom he loves—Pallas, queen of the game, in which all

join, as Guillot enters, followed very soon by Manon and Des Grieux. The two

latter have spent in rioting nearly all the money sent Des Grieux by his mother, and Manon has enticed him to enter this gambling place in the hope that his gains at play may enable her to continue a life of extravagant dissipation, that is the very bounds of her ambition.

Guillot stops the revelry by loudly inquiring: "What is the cause of all this stir?" but the actresses answer: "It is the charming Manon with her dear chevalier," and attention is immediately directed towards the two. Des Grieux pays no heed to the company, being conscious-stricken at having yielded to the persuasion of Manon to visit such a place. Guillot is visibly annoyed by the presence of his rival, but is drawn aside by Lescaut and at the croupier's call the game is renewed. Left alone with her lover, Manon asks: "Tell me now, Des Grieux, does thy heart acknowledge me its sovereign?" Whereat, with a show of much anger, he turns upon her:

"Manon, thou sphinx! thou siren luring to destruction! I at once love and hate thee. Pleasure and gold are thy sole ambition, yet vain as thou art I cannot help loving thee."

He has read her aright, for to these accusings she makes no other answer than to heartlessly tell him, "Oh, how I could love thee if thou wouldst—" She hesitates to speak her guilty wish, so monstrous in its wrong, but vanity dispels her scruples, and with profligate boldness she begs him seek to repair his fortune at the faro table, to which request Lescaut adds his own. So persistent and caressingly does she entice him against his will, promising to give her heart with the stakes, that Des Grieux yields to her entreaties and offers to play against Guillot. When his consent is given the actresses make their boasts and lay side wagers,

"Ah! Manon! no longer will I struggle against myself!"



while Manon sings joyously of the music of gold, and the pleasures of the hour. Guillot and Des Grieux lay their bets of a thousand crowns, which the latter wins, and when the wagers are doubled Des Grieux's success is repeated, whereupon with much satisfaction he shows his winnings to Manon, who appears transported. Guillot flies into a jealous rage and accuses Des Grieux of robbing him, who resents the charge with a blow, and great excitement follows. When the combatants are separated, Guillot calls the actresses to be his witnesses, and turning to leave the room he threatens Manon and Des Grieux that they shall both be called to a quick reckoning. The others join in accusing Des Grieux of cheating, whereat, to avoid a serious trouble, Manon beseeches him to leave the place, but he refuses, lest retreat may be regarded as confession of the charge. While the party is thus disputing angrily, loud knocking is heard at the door, and the players excitedly cover their gold, anticipating that officers are at hand. A moment later the police force an entrance, accompanied by Guillot, who points to Des Grieux as the culprit wanted, and to Manon as his accomplice. Des Grieux grows furious, and fiercely threatens to throw Guillot from the window. At this instant the count (father) appears and superciliously speaks: "And I? Shall I be served the same?" Des Grieux is so shamed and astonished by his father beholding him in such place and plight, and a discovery of his violated holy vows, that he is able to say no more than: "Father! You here! You——" To which the count replies: "Yes; to save you from a foul disgrace, if by repentant tears you will clear from stain your guilty name."

Manon is covered with confusion, and trembling with terror at the fate which threatens, sings, with intense expression, "All the future lies dark now before me," etc. The count is obdurate, appreciating the situation to which his son has been brought by a mad infatuation, and commands the officers take the two prisoners; but in an aside he tells Des Grieux that he shall soon be restored to liberty. "What of Manon?" the miserable man plaintively inquires, to which Guillot answers: "Ah, she shall be sent to keep company with many of her kind." Des Grieux throws himself before Manon declaring he will defend her with his life, but the officers forcibly separate them, with which affecting scene the act closes.

Act V.—The concluding action of the opera takes place in a lonely spot on the road to Havre. Des Grieux has been released, but Manon has been condemned to transportation and is being taken by the guard, with many other wretches, to the port of Havre, whence it is intended they shall be sent to Louisiana, to swell the penal colony there. Des Grieux has lost none of his infatuation for the frail creature who has been the author of his misery, and with blind fatuity he has followed after in the vain hope of rescuing her. When the curtain rises, he is seen seated by the wayside bewailing his misfortune and crying to Heaven for aid. Lescaut approaches, whom Des Grieux impetuously addresses, begging him to bring his guardsmen to the assistance of Manon; but Lescaut sorrowfully tells him that his guard has forsaken him, and that further hope of help cannot be entertained. Distracted by his grief Des Grieux will not believe Lescaut, and calls him villain of cowards, who has no courage to aid the rescue of the woman he loves. Presently the voices of soldiers are heard, and soon they are seen advancing convoying a group of prisoners, among whom Manon, tattered, dusty, worn, dejected, is seen. Des Grieux rushes forward offering to attack the guards, but is restrained by Lescaut, who begs him to use

means less rash, and that so doing he shall more surely see her. Thus persuaded, Des Grieux

withdraws with Lescaut behind some bushes as the procession draws near. As the soldiers appear, a sergeant is heard to remark that there is small glory escorting such fair companions; to which one of the men replies: "No, indeed; and one of them is now half dead from the weary march." "Oh, that is Manon!" answers the sergeant, at the mention of which name Des Grieux utters a cry of agony; but Lescaut bids him be patient and all may yet be well, for he has conceived a plan to rescue her. Lescaut thereupon

"Extremely sorry, but the play was too good.
I told you I would have my revenge.
I have trumped your card, my master.
Console yourself as best you can."



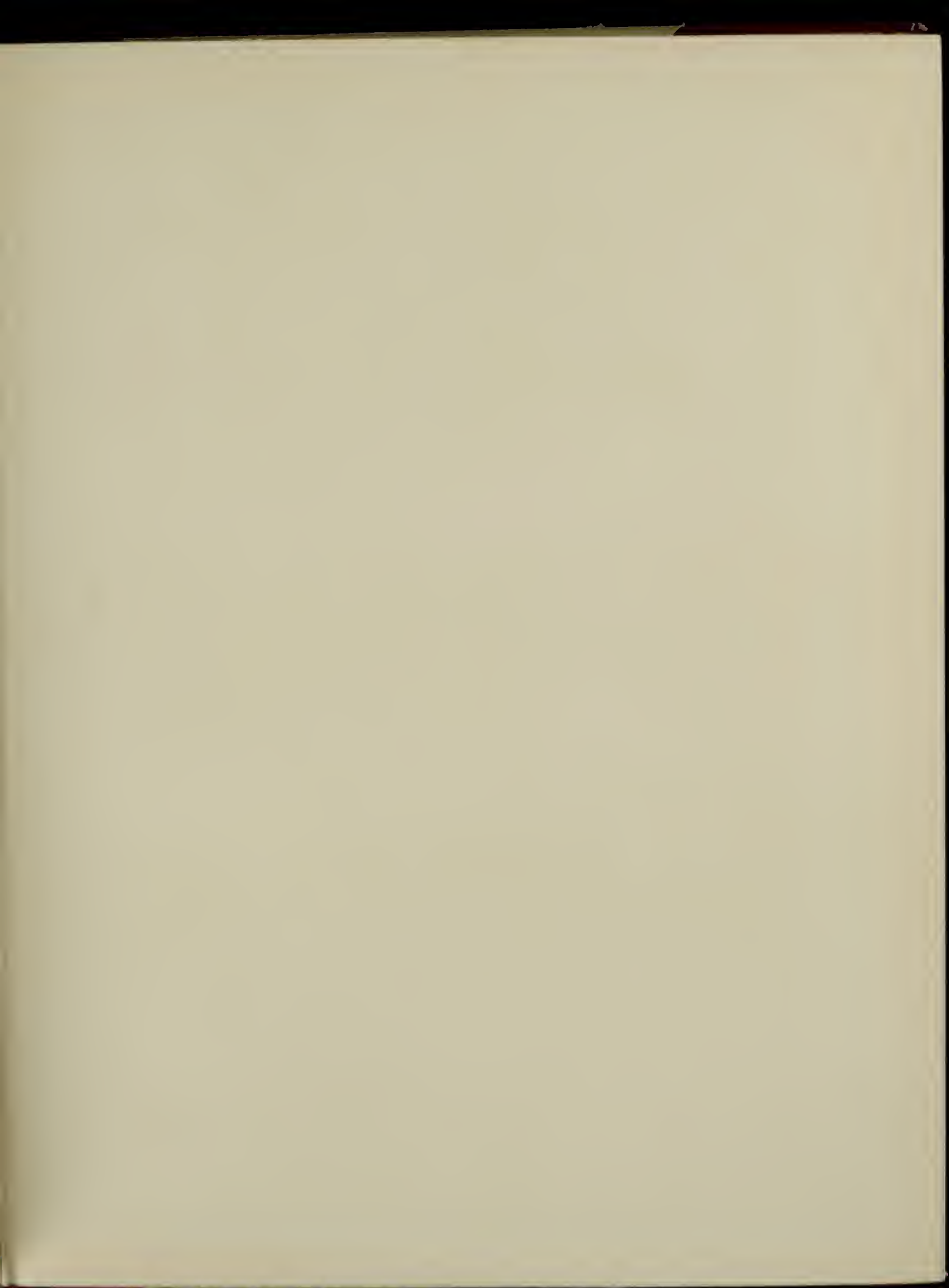
"There stands your prisoner, and his accomplice!"

comes out from his place of hiding and accosting the sergeant, as comrade! takes him away with a view to bribing him to permit Manon's escape. As the two disappear Manon is seen coming down a path, unattended, who discovering Des Grieux rushes into his arms with a joyful cry. Delirious with gladness, the chevalier embraces her with great ardor and implores that she leave off weeping and think of the many happy hours that may yet be theirs. Tenderly he encourages her to dismiss all fear, and entreats her to fly with him, while opportunity invites, to a place far from the troubles and dangers that now assail, to some quiet spot where they may live, love and rest in sweet content through all the years that Heaven may spare them.

To the loving words of Des Grieux Manon makes answer by thanking him for his great goodness of soul, and for the rare devotion which he has exhibited, amid vicissitudes that might turn to hate a less loyal heart. Brought to the brink of eternity, she divests herself of that pride through which she has fallen so low, and the full consciousness of her sinful life bursts like a flood upon her, drowning all ambitions. Overwhelmed by remorse she piteously appeals for pardon, and wishes she might atone with her blood for all the griefs her ingratitude and vanity have caused him. Des Grieux consoles her with many passionate utterances, and in this reconciliation the two voice their feelings in song of ecstasy. But 'tis not for long their joy abides. Manon grows weaker from excitement; the light of her life flickers as does a candle under the wind; she feels that the end draweth near; that this hour of bliss is speeding her towards the shades that no sun will ever brighten. With failing voice she begs Des Grieux will talk to her of other days; of the inn at Amiens; the diligence; the letter to his father; the prayer at St. Sulpice. Des Grieux interrupts to plead with her to fly while chance permits; but more feebly still she protests that all strength is fast departing, and that release may not be found save by that means which God provides for the weary. He tries to arouse her by calling attention to the evening star, that shines to give them warning of their opportunity to escape. "Oh! what lovely gems! Thou knowest I was always fond of jewels," she answers; then with stifled voice, she utters: "I love thee! Take thou this kiss; 'tis my farewell forever." Grief-racked, Des Grieux takes her hand and repeats the language which she used to win him from his vows at St. Sulpice, but her life is too far gone. Whispering, she craves that he will wake her not, but rock her in his arms, and forget the past, "For now dawneth upon me a day of peace. Farewell, I die!"

With a cry of anguish Des Grieux falls upon poor Manon's body, which concludes this tragedy of the passions.







Norma

AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING BY WILLIAM DE LEFTWICH DODGE.

NORMA—*"Craven suppliant, at praying ye're tardy ;
Through this heart I best can wound thee !"*

Act II.—Scene X

NORMA.

MUSIC BY BELLINI.—WORDS BY ROMANI



of the really great operas, notwithstanding it is less frequently sung than are many of its compeers, or even others of smaller merit. Its initial production was at the Scala, Milan, during the Lenten season of 1832, where it produced a sensation among musical people, and so captivated the public that Soumet's tragedy, upon which *Norma* is founded, and which was being played at the time with great success, was almost instantly neglected, not to be revived again. It was sung in the original in London in 1833, and four years later Planche's English version was produced at Drury Lane Theatre, which has ever since been retained as the standard libretto among English-speaking people.

The action of the opera takes place in ancient Gaul during occupation of the country by the Romans, when the Druidical religion was prevalent among the Gallic natives. The Druids had the most intense hatred for the invaders, and their faith was not stronger than was their ambition to expel the subjugators, a purpose that was made a part of their religion. The motive of the opera concerns the interdicted love of *Norma*, a high priestess, for *Pollio*, a Roman proconsul, to whom she has become bound by a secret marriage and bears him two children. *Pollio*, faithless and perfidious, conceives a guilty love for *Adalgisa*, a virgin in the Druid temple, whom he persuades to abandon her religion and consent to fly with him to Rome—a baneful act that he expiates on the funeral pyre, dying thus with *Norma*, the magnanimous.

At the rising of the curtain a scene is presented that represents a forest abounding in gloom. Among the trees is the great oak of *Irmisul*, sacred to the Druids, the roots of which have been watered by human blood and whose sustenance is derived from slaughtered victims. It rears its gigantic and ominous branches high in the air, casting gruesome shadows over a large circle composed of upright stones, in the centre of which is the stone of sacrifice, and on an elevation a score of priests and priestesses stand ready to perform their savage rites. Slow and solemn music is heard, and in the background Gallic troops are defiling while a long procession of Druids appear, followed by the arch chief *Oroveso* and his attendants. The time is night, and flickering shadows, cast by an inconstant moon, lend fearsome apprehension to the scene. The music of a military march is heard, which serves as a prelude to utterance of the high-priest who, with impressive speech, bids his ministrants prepare to call the faithful to their appointed duties when the brazen tocsin shall sound, and the great prophetess, *Norma*, shall appear to bid them rise against their Roman oppressors. Thereupon follows a chorus, "With thy prophetic oracle," etc., after the rendering of which all withdraw among the trees.

Scene II.—*Pollio*, the Gallic proconsul, and *Flavius*, his friend and confidant, come upon the stage. The latter is first to speak, reminding the consul that *Norma* has warned them against obtruding their presence upon this scene of Druid worship, where hideous death is latent. When questioned why he shudders at the mention of her name, *Pollio* confesses to a



"With me in Rome before the shrine was *Adalgisa*,
When an unearthly shade fashioned itself from nothing."

culprit's conscience, and that some demon, envying him his treasure, has made him restless of his marriage bonds, that secretly he married Norma and by her became father of two lovely children, but that through some unholy influence he has come to love her no longer. Flavius, suspecting the cause, makes bold to ask if he is not moved by passion for another, to which Pollio shamefully replies that it is most true, that a virgin, young and beautiful, Adalgisa, the fairest of her sister ministrants in the blood-bespattered temple of the savage sect, doth possess his heart. Flavius is shocked by this confession, and bids him consult his conscience and his fears how offended Norma may satisfy her vengeance. Pollio shrinks at this caution and tells of a direful vision that recently disturbed his sleep, when fancying himself in Rome before the marriage shrine with Adalgisa, suddenly an unearthly awful shade like a Druid's mantle fell upon him. Adalgisa was swept from his side and there came a stifled groan of words admonishing, "Norma thus makes example of traitors false to love."

The conversation between Pollio and Flavius is interrupted by the sound of a booming noise from the sacred bronze, and the voices of a chorus in the distance announcing the rising moon. Flavius exhorts his friend to flee, but Pollio tarries a few moments to express defiance and hatred of the Druids, whom he calls infidels, drunk with blood of the innocent.

Scene III.—As the two Romans go off the stage there enter, from the back, Druids, priestesses, soldiers, bards, sacrificers, preceded by Oroveso. The chorus proclaim Norma and call for her presence, which is quickly followed by her appearance with attendant priestesses. She solemnly advances, an impressive spectacle. Her long hair falls streaming over her shoulders; her forehead is wreathed with the mystic vervain, and in her hand she bears a golden sickle used in cutting the mistletoe from the sacred oak. Majestically she ascends the stone of sacrifice, where, contemplating the assemblage for a moment, she thus addresses:

"Lo, ye attempt seditions!
Crying for warfare, tonguing the trump of battle
At the shrine of your godhead, who thus presuming
Foresteps the mission of the prophetic Norma."

Oroveso betrays impatience and asks when they shall be bidden to attack their oppressors, whereat all cry for vengeance against the foes of their liberties; but Norma replies that the time is not yet come for an uprising, and that dire misfortunes will fall upon them if they refuse to heed her counsel; that 'tis better to wait the will of Esus (the Druid deity), seeing that Rome is fast becoming a prey to her own vices, like a scorpion self-stung. Having by these cautions quelled the turbulent passions of her people, Norma clips the mistletoe from the oak and depositing it in the consecrated basket, she lifts high her arms and all kneel reverently, the moon flooding the scene with mellow refulgence, as she addresses an exquisite prayer to the "Queen of Heaven" that the martial ardor of the Gauls may be appeased and peace prevail. The chorus unite in these appeals and the service is completed, but before the dispersion Norma commands that no profane foot shall tread the sacred forest until Esus makes known his wishes through her lips. The people promise obedience, swearing that when the signal for war is given they will rid the world of the hateful proconsul, to whose oppressions they attribute their sorrows. These threatenings cause Norma to tremble for



"Lo, ye attempt seditions!
Crying for warfare, tonguing the trump of battle!"

solicitude of the man she loves, her husband by unpublished bans, yet the arch enemy of her people. Her emotions are expressed in a cavatina of wondrous tenderness, "The bloom of life is lying," etc., at the conclusion of which the stage is deserted.

Scene V.—Adalgisa enters, now the only tenant of the grove. come to visit the scene where Pollio first poured into her willing ears the protestations that made her recreant to her religious vows. Conscience-stricken over her infidelity she falls upon the altar and prays for strength to resist his entreaties. While she is thus engaged Pollio comes upon the scene, where, discovering her prostrate, he dismisses his attendant, and approaching, asks the cause of her anguish. She implores him to leave her, and declares that the gods forbid her to listen to his sacrilegious speech. But he answers her rebukes with more passionate pleading to abandon her cruel gods and fly with him to Rome, where they may live in peace and love. Still resisting his adjurations, she protests that her allegiance is to the decrees of the sacred oracle, and begs him cease his beseeching. Thereupon Pollio exclaims:

"Go, then, unkind one, to thy dark altar.
With a worthy offering bear thee;
Take my life-blood; nor deem I'd falter.
Pain were pleasure suffer'd near thee."

Thus protesting that it would be less cruel to offer him as a sacrifice to Irmisul than to reject his love, that being reft of her affections he must submit himself to a woeful fate and return to Rome exiled from her presence, he turns painfully, betraying emotion that shakes his whole being, and moves away.

At thought of parting with Pollio, Adalgisa is stricken with a greater grief, and between conflicting desires she is overwhelmed with doubt, whether to remain faithful to her vows or renounce her religion and follow the impulse of her heart. Observing her indecision Pollio renews his petitions that she go with him to Rome, and thereupon follows a duet, "Yes, in Rome," that is remarkable for its power and sweetness. Unable longer to resist the passionate aspirations of her heart, Adalgisa promises to forego her oaths, her infatuation rendering her mindless of the punishment provided for violation of virginal vows, and she consents to meet him in this spot on the morrow to arrange for their flight to Rome.

Scene VI.—The next action takes place in Norma's apartments. Norma and her maid, Clotilde,

appear, leading the two children of the former, who, after kissing them affectionately, orders that they

be taken away to a safe concealment. Clotilde cannot understand this strange mood, and asks for explanation, to which Norma answers by confessing that though she is bound to her children by the strongest maternal love, she is hateful to herself for having begotten them by a secret marriage at the expense of her sacred pledge. Her grief is now distracting to learn that Pollio has been called to Rome without giving her a token of his desire that she shall accompany him. The horrible suspicion, therefore, assails that he would leave her widowed, and e'en abandon his children, possibly with perfidious intent. Yet such thought she admits is fire-brain madness on the

"Both my God, my home forsaking,
Home and God are in thee now."



"Shake to thy centre, perfidious one
Thou know'st the cause is ample"



"Protect me now, great power, lest I sink and am lost."

tion, that establishes the perfidy of her husband, Norma is thrown into a rage of anger, grief, despair, which Adalgisa, innocent in her doings, cannot understand. After some moments of suppressed emotions, Norma advances furiously upon the confused Pollio, whom she thus accuses:

"Shake to thy centre, perfidious one!
Thou know'st the cause is ample;
Aye, for thy felon self alone.
We'll have ye need to tremble;
Shrink out of life in fear
For those thine offspring and for me!"

Adalgisa implores the cowering culprit to explain his situation, but when he stands silent, thus tacitly acknowledging his crime, she covers her face with her hands and wails her woe in accents despairing. This painful scene closes with a terzetto, "Oh, how his arts deceived thee," etc., in which to Norma's wrathful accusations, and Adalgisa's rueful shaming, Pollio beseeches his wronged wife to spare the suffering girl further discovery of

throne of reason which she must repel. As they are thus conversing, sounds of footsteps are heard, and at Norma's bidding, Clotilde retires with the children.

Scene VII.—Adalgisa enters, betraying great nervousness, and striving to still her fast-beating heart with words of self-encouragement. As she draws near, Norma questions her: "I hear thou seekest advice on a matter of mighty import!" Thus accosted, Adalgisa prostrates herself, weeping and speechless, but Norma tenderly embraces her and bids the trembling girl speak freely. After some hesitation, Adalgisa gains courage to make her confession that she has violated her religious vows, pledging herself to virginity and faithfulness, by falling in love with one who first addressed her while at her devotions before the altar of Irmisul, "a brighter deity, proffering sweetly diviner heaven before me."

By this admission Norma is reminded of how she herself was wooed in a self-same fashion, and is thereby better able to appreciate the power of the seductions to which Adalgisa has succumbed, and to sympathize with her distresses. With merciful tenderness Norma persuades her to cease her weeping, and with sweet compassion gives a release from her vows. Adalgisa is overjoyed by this kindness of the prophetess and voices her gratitude in a delightful aria:

"Oh, let thy lip repeat to me
That hallow'd, blest consenting,
And dissipate in ecstasy
All clouds of doubts tormenting," etc.

Norma, with womanly curiosity, but of naught suspecting, questions the timid and now transported girl if her lover be friend or foe? to which Adalgisa answers that he is alien to rugged Gaul and that Rome is his country. At this moment, when Norma asks her his name, Pollio enters, and Adalgisa replies, "Behold him!" By this revela-



"And Pollio most madly essays
To tear her o'en from the shrine of Esus."

his guilt. Turning to Adalgisa he tries to compel her to follow him, but she indignantly resists his efforts, and commands that he leave her forever. Norma, not yet conscious of the innocence of the suffering girl, bids her go with him, but Adalgisa declares that death is preferable to union with one so base as he. Pollio, stung to desperate hate by this defeat of his vile purpose, tauntingly tells Norma that his affection for her is dead forever, lost in that which he bears for the tender girl whose innocent beauty has won his heart beyond recall. This utterance, that proves the blackness of his soul, excites Norma to renew her denunciation and execration:

"From my sight, and from remembrance!
To the hell thy deeds create thee!
To the threshold of existence
These my curses thy soul pursuing
Shall inhabit the eternal distance
Of thy night beyond, in death!"

Pollio, stolid, defiant, bids his wronged wife rage forever, yet naught on earth or in heaven shall wean him from his purpose to possess the one he loves. These passionate outbursts are as daggers to the heart of Adalgisa, who condemns herself for being even the unconscious cause of discord between the two, and earnestly she tries to reconcile them to their previous state, forgetful of her own griefs in the sympathy she feels for Norma. Suddenly the three are startled by a chorus from within summoning Norma to repair to the temple, responsive to the calling voice of Esus.

Norma, gazing upon Pollio with mingled feelings of rage and pity, admonishes him that the call is that of death, which speaks to him in solemn warning. Adalgisa, understanding its import, implores him to seek safety in flight, but he scornfully challenges all powers, and threatens to overthrow the temple and all the fell deities of Druidism. The sacred bronze is now heard sounding in the temple summoning Norma to the rites. She repulses Pollio, and commanding him to retire, the curtain falls on the first act.

Act II, Scene I.—When the action is resumed the interior of Norma's home is shown, and her two children are seen sleeping on a bear-skin-covered Roman couch. Norma enters, pale and distracted of look, carrying a lamp and dagger, and placing the former upon a table she seats herself to contemplate the awful deed which she has resolved to commit. With a sickened soul the miserable mother reasons of the expediency of the crime, and convincing herself that to murder her children is the only way by which to save them from disgrace, and herself from destruction, she rises resolutely and exclaims: "They must die!" but as she approaches the slumbering innocents, her maternal instincts compel her to pause, and she thus speaks to herself:

"My bloody purpose sticks,
It'd with its own dread.—What, slay mine offspring!
Are they not gems from the mine of affection
Jeweled here, in this bosom?
How are they guilty? Their being born to Pollio
Amplify gives answers. Spurned with the hate I bear him,
For him they must perish. I strike——"

Norma rushes upon her children to make them a sacrifice to her hate of a faithless husband, but as she raises her hand to deliver the fatal blow, motherhood, that most powerful of instincts, arrests her vengeful hand, and, uttering a



"Ah, no! They're my children! my children!"

piercing cry, she falls on her knees, and embracing them with a very delirium of love, exclaims: "They are my children!" Excitedly, she calls Clotilde, and the maid responding, she orders her to quickly bring Adalgisa, and while waiting for the maiden, Norma expresses remorse for her violated vows, which must find atonement in the fiery penalty provided for apostates to the Druid faith

Scene III.—Adalgisa appears in answer to Clotilde's summons, and observing the pallor on Norma's cheeks timidly asks the cause. The miserable woman makes a supreme effort to show composure, but confessing to the maid that death's signet is on her brow, she pathetically craves a promise of her to fulfill a last request. This Adalgisa solemnly declares

she will perform, whereupon Norma tells her that the blazing pyre will soon rid the earth of her polluted presence, and that when this atonement shall be made she implores that Adalgisa will be mother to her orphaned babes; to convey them to one whom she dares not name, but whom she prays may be spouse and father truer than he has proved; lastly, she begs Adalgisa to bear her forgiveness to that one who has so basely wronged her, and to tell him that this was her dying wish.

Adalgisa is horrified by Norma's wretchedness, and appalled by her request. Passionately she declares that she will not wed a recreant such as Pollio, and she beseeches Norma to think no more of dying, but to live for her children's sake. Still Norma exhorts to fulfillment of her promise, at which insistence, Adalgisa encourages her friend to hope for a reconciliation; offering to appear as a suppliant before Pollio to win him back to his first allegiance, to his wife and children. Norma, from out the depths of her despair, prays that she may be left alone, but Adalgisa vows she will not leave her, and the two now voice their sorrows in a duet, while the children are kneeling before their mother:

"Dearest Norma, before thee kneeling,
Wouldst win that soul, by this entreating," etc.

The plaintive entreaties of Adalgisa finally prevail, and Norma, touched by the faithful nature of her friend, who magnanimously offers to renounce all love and hopes for her sake, consents to live, whereupon the two render another exquisite duet, in which they promise a mutual devotion, and to share the loving care of the children, who, if deserted by a father, shall find two mothers instead.

"In the sacred secret of our virgin cloisters
vigilance seized him."

Scene IV.—The following scene takes place in a solitary spot near the sacred forest, where the Gallic army joins the Druid priests. These latter ask in chorus if the Romans have yet gone, and are answered by many warrior voices that the enemy are still in force before the sacred grove. At this moment Oroveso appears, who expresses regret that he is not able to bring better report, but that the gods still refuse to sanction the revolt, and that further woe doth threaten them through Pollio's successor, who is even more unmerciful than he. The restless warriors question him of Norma's purpose, but sorrowfully he replies that she remains strangely silent, and when they clamor for counsel, he exhorts them to restrain their fury until in her own good time and prescient wisdom she shall call them to fly to arms against their oppressors. The warriors are quieted by his advice, and take their departure, threatening to destroy the hateful army of Romans when the war trumpets sound and the signal for action shall be given.

Scene V.—In the following scene the temple of Irmisul is represented, showing an altar on each side. Norma is the first one to appear, she having repaired to this sacred place to await Adalgisa, who has undertaken to persuade Pollio to meet them here. Norma's hopes have been revived by the encouraging pleadings of the virgin priestess, and she is in a condition of pleased expectation when Clotilde comes in, who immediately bids Norma prepare to hear the worst tidings;



that Adalgisa's mission has been fruitless, and that, overwhelmed by her grief, she has turned, lowly and weeping, to repronounce allegiance to her priestly vows of virginity. "But what of Pollio?" the trembling Norma eagerly inquires. "Most violent in his madness, he even now is trying to tear her from the shrine of Esus," is Clotilde's answer.

At the revelations of Clotilde all the fury of Norma's nature is again aroused, and rushing to the altar she vehemently strikes the brazen war gong, exclaiming: "He, hath he such presumption? In success to his effort, thou fit libation, life blood of Rome, gush forth now in torrents." From within is heard many voices crying, "'Tis a call to the temple! A signal that summons the Druid hosts to war!"

Scene VI.—At sound of the gong, priests and warriors come thronging into the temple, headed by Oroveso, who anxiously asks of Norma, standing by the altar, the import of the call, to which she impetuously cries: "Warfare! Slaughter! Destruction!" Oroveso reminds her that just before she bade them wear the yoke in mute subjection, and that they marvel at this sudden change of will. Loudly she answers them: "These bonds that quell'd ye; now are they snapped asunder," etc.

She chants a splendid hymn, "Warfare! warfare! the hungry wolf glances," etc., that is full of fury and of a mysticism suggestive of dreadful sacrifice. As the battle song is ended, Oroveso gazes about him for a suitable human victim to offer up in accordance with their bloody rites, but finding none, so informs the furious prophetess. She counsels him to have no concern, as the awful shrine of Esus never fails. At this juncture a great tumult is heard in another part of the temple, and in Scene VII Clotilde approaches Norma to inform her that an impious Roman has just been taken who had forced his way into the cloisters of the virgins to forcibly carry away one of the inmates. Norma instinctively thinks it may be Pollio, and recoils at the prospects of his awful punishment, for though hating him for his perfidy, she still loves him with woman's infatuation, that excuses all faults.

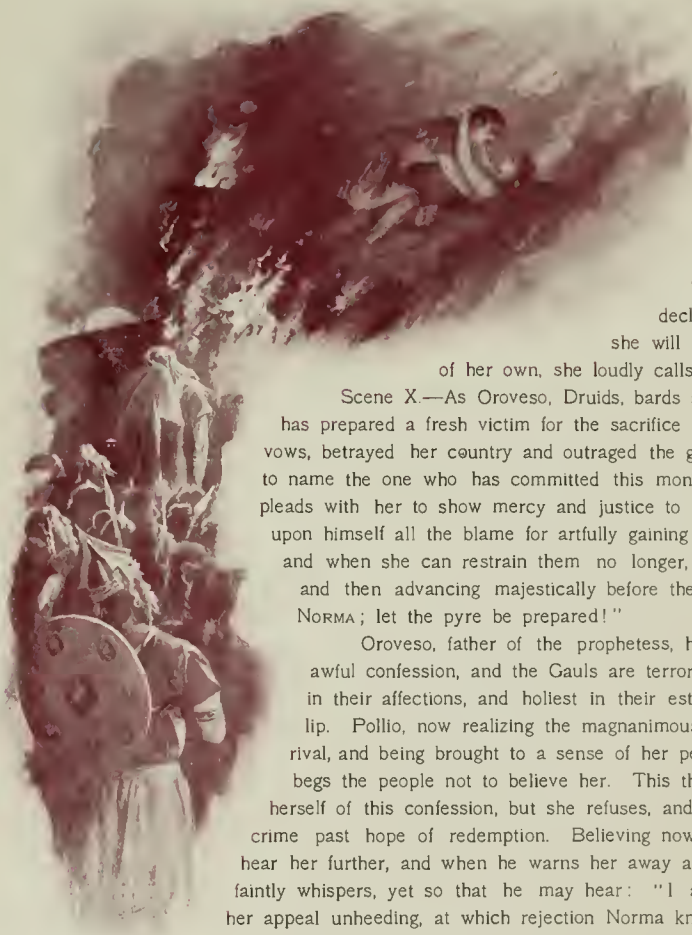
Scene VIII.—Immediately following Clotilde's announcement, Pollio is dragged into the temple by a troop of warriors. At sight of him Norma's blood runs hotter with vengeful desire. Oroveso execrates the miserable man, pronouncing him a sacrilegious despot, and placing a dagger at his breast, demands to know what prompted him to profane the mysteries of the temple, thus to dare Esus' wrath. Pollio, losing none of his defiance, bids the chief priest strike, but to spare him idle interrogations. At this Norma reveals herself to Pollio, and ordering Oroveso to stand aside, reminds him that hers is the office to question, and to execute culprits. The warriors exclaim with one voice, "A worthier victim doth offer." Norma snatches the dagger from Oroveso and advances threateningly upon Pollio, who quails not before her angry gaze, even when she appears ready to make a fatal thrust. But her sudden impulse is arrested, at which the people express impatience, and ask what fears assail her. More calmly she asks all present to retire while she questions him to learn if it were insidious lust or base accomplice priestess that has given him persuasion to steal his way into the sacred cloisters.

At Norma's request Oroveso, priests, priestesses and warriors go out of the temple leaving Norma alone with her recreant spouse. With show of pity she tells Pollio that though his life is forfeit by his desperate act, and that he has violated his marriage vows, she will spare him if he will swear by his innocent babes and the gods of Rome to relinquish his designs upon Adalgisa, whom to pursue is heinous love. But he protests that he is not so vile, and will brave the fury of both gods and men, rather than renounce the passion that has prompted his acts.

Rendered more desperate by his imperturbable manner and flagitious conduct, she tells him how near she was to murdering his children, and intimates that his persistent infamy will drive her to commit this horrid deed. He implores her to strike him dead for his crimes, but to spare the babes for their innocence, and endeavors to snatch



"Nay, most cruel, thus let another
In their stead usurp the fate:
Give that dagger!"



"Norma, let thy pyre receive me."

the dagger. Finding him immovable, even at threatening to slay her children, she denounces Adalgisa as the author of her misery, and furiously declares that she shall perish in the blazing pile appointed to punish priestesses who violate their holy vows. At this awful threat the false-hearted husband, the imperious proconsul, loses his firmness, and sinking upon his knees beseeches her to expend her just wrath upon him, who is alone guilty, but to spare the girl whose offence is not greater than that of being the innocent object of his affections.

This prayer serves only to increase Norma's anger, declaring that through the bosom of that one he loves she will reach his heart and teach him to understand the agony of her own, she loudly calls to her presence the ministrants of the temple.

Scene X.—As Oroveso, Druids, bards and warriors re-enter, Norma vehemently tells them she has prepared a fresh victim for the sacrifice of vengeance, a perjured priestess who has broken her vows, betrayed her country and outraged the gods of their faith. In chorus the ministrants exhort her to name the one who has committed this monstrous sin, but she withholds the revelation while Pollio pleads with her to show mercy and justice to the poor girl who has done no voluntary wrong, taking upon himself all the blame for artfully gaining her love. Importunately the people call for the victim, and when she can restrain them no longer, she casts a look of love, pity, and regret upon Pollio, and then advancing majestically before the priests, she distinctly, resignedly, pronounces: "It is NORMA; let the pyre be prepared!"

Oroveso, father of the prophetess, high-priest of his people, grows pale from horror at this awful confession, and the Gauls are terror-stricken that guilt so fearful should be upon one chief in their affections, and holiest in their esteem, wherefor a cry of consternation breaks from every lip. Pollio, now realizing the magnanimous purpose of Norma, to sacrifice herself to save her rival, and being brought to a sense of her peril, implores her to retract her admission, and frantically begs the people not to believe her. This the ministrants would fain do, and they ask her to purge herself of this confession, but she refuses, and approaching her father, she solemnly pronounces her crime past hope of redemption. Believing now in her guilt, Oroveso spurns her, but she begs him to hear her further, and when he warns her away as one unworthy longer to stand in his presence, she faintly whispers, yet so that he may hear: "I am a mother!" Ruthlessly he bids her quit his sight, her appeal unheeding, at which rejection Norma kneels before him and beseeches: "Ah, father, afford me this one relief. Foster the homeless innocents," etc.

The sweet resignation and noble nature of Norma, whose pardon she generously bestows for his infidelity, rekindles Pollio's former love, and he declares it highest bliss to mount the sacrificial pyre with her, and thus uniting their souls in death they may be bound forever in heaven. Oroveso weeping, that sentence is inexorable, invites a last embrace. The chorus render a dirge of sorrow for their lost prophetess, at which Oroveso throws a black mantle over her saying, "Go, thou, lost one." She starts forward, but uttering "dearest father," falls, and is caught in Pollio's arms, who bears her with him joyously to the pyre, which they ascend together in love triumphant. Oroveso, unable longer to repress the torrent of his grief, exclaims, with breaking heart:

"Gush out, gush out at last—break forth, O tears!
Nature permits thee to a suffering father!"



A LIFE SKETCH OF MOZART.



HE genius of man occasionally is so great that it rises to heights beyond our slender view, and seems to claim affinity with the grace of angels—an attribute that appears to belong to the subject of this brief biography. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, one of the greatest composers the world has known, was born January 27, 1756, at the city of Salzburg, capital of the present Austrian crown lands, and died in the same city, December 5, 1791. Mozart was christened Joannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus, a name sufficiently long to serve a distinguished purpose, which his father compromised by substituting Gottlieb for Theophilus, the largest concession he could be persuaded to make. Mozart was so poorly satisfied with this questionable indulgence that he added to the interminable chain of prænomena which he was compelled to bear by signing himself by his confirmation name, Sigismundus, but subsequently he asserted his independence and wrote his name J. G. Wolfgang, and thenceforth, in private life, he was

called Wolfgang, or Wolfgang Amade.

Mozart is the most conspicuous example of musical precocity that history affords, since it may be truly said he was, like Apollo, a musician almost at his birth. His father was quick to perceive the taste and bent of the youthful mind, and began giving him piano-forte lessons at the age of three years. In one year little Wolfgang executed the most technical pieces on this instrument, and then mastered the violin with equal facility, becoming so skillful that in 1761 he was performing in public, and excited profound amazement wherever he appeared. His sister, Marienne, two years Wolfgang's senior, was scarcely less remarkable as a musician, and in 1762 their father took the two children upon a professional tour of Europe, which was so successful that their performances continued, in nearly all the principal cities, and before all the courts, until 1766. Wolfgang was not only a wonderful performer, but a composer as well, whose improvisations and written compositions were the wonder of the world. As early as 1763-64, four of his sonatas for piano and violin were published in Paris. In 1764 he took singing lessons for a while with Manzuoli, of London, and was also instructed for a few months in music by Johann Sebastian Bach. About this time, while stopping in Chelsea, Wolfgang wrote his first symphony, which was accepted as a remarkable composition, compared even with the productions of the great creators of melody.

In January, 1768, the father and his two precocious children went to Vienna, where they were received with such demonstrations of admiration that Wolfgang was commissioned to write the score of his first opera, "La Finta Semplice," which was not given, however, until his return to Salzburg, a year later, at the palace of the Archbishop, where it was received with so much favor that it gained for him an appointment as concert master. But as no salary was allowed, the position being one of honor only, Wolfgang set out with his father in 1769 to make a two years' tour of Italy, which were destined to be years of extraordinary triumphs for him—greater, indeed, than any other musician ever achieved. At Rome he heard for the first time, in the Sistine Chapel, Allegri's "Miserere," a composition so reverently admired that the chapel musicians were forbidden, on pain of excommunication, to copy any part of it, or to render it outside the chapel. It is a remarkable fact that after hearing this famous "Miserere" once, Wolfgang wrote the full score from memory. The Pope, instead of showing displeasure at what had before been regarded a profanation, so greatly admired Wolfgang's amazing genius that he conferred upon him the "Order of the Golden Spur." At this time the marvelously gifted boy was so small that in order to perform the pious act of kissing St. Peter's toe,—a statue in the great Cathedral of Rome,—he had to be lifted to the necessary height.

A singular thing happened to the youthful musician at Naples, where his wonderful performances created such a furore of excitement that the people stoutly declared he was aided by the powers that resided in a magical ring which he wore. So persistent was this amazing belief that to disabuse the Neapolitans, he removed the ring, whereat the people were thrown into a very frenzy of delight. At every place his musical performances were given,—Venice, Rome, Naples, Mantua, Padua,



WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Florence, Verona,—he was received as a demigod, and honors of every kind were heaped upon him. These adulations did not consist merely of decorations and praises, for they took a higher form at Milan, where he was commissioned to write an opera for the Christmas festivities which were appointed to be celebrated in the great La Scala theatre. At this time he was only fourteen years of age, yet upon the production of his opera, "Mitridate," he conducted the largest orchestra in Europe, and so successfully that the Milanese, carried away by their enthusiasm, shouted, as with one voice, "It is music from heaven!"

However distinguished one may be among alien peoples, it is rare that full appreciation is given by the countrymen of genius. In Italy, France, and England young Mozart was treated as a prince, a gift of the gods, a child of enchantment, but in his own country, in Salzburg and Vienna, he was neglected, if not despised. While at the house of the bishop of Salzburg seeking, by prayers to those of influence, for some appointment that might afford him the means of support while pursuing his studies, he was forced to share the mean accommodations of the bishop's servants.



MOZART'S HOME. SALZBURG.

His tours had been remarkable for the demonstrations of delight which they excited, but they had yielded small returns in money, and his father being very poor, young Mozart was forced to humiliating efforts in his applications for employment. Finally, in 1777, he was compelled, for means of livelihood, to undertake another tour, upon which he was accompanied by his mother. Although he set out with the prestige of a great fame he was nowhere so successful as before, and in 1778, while giving performances in Paris his mother died, leaving him quite inconsolable. But his misfortunes were not yet ended. Soon afterwards he conceived a violent passion for a young lady of Munich, Aloisia Weber, with whose father he lived for a while, but his love was rejected, whereupon feeling the need of womanly sympathy, he accepted the

affections of Aloisia's younger sister, Constance, whom he married August 4, 1782, though it was "amid the weeping and wailing of every one present."

The year that preceded his marriage Mozart produced his first great opera, "Idomeneo," for a carnival in Munich, which, though it determined his rank as a composer, really brought him no profit, so that he remained, through an inscrutable fortune, a child of fame but to wealth unknown. To maintain existence, which had become more precarious after assuming the support of a wife, Mozart gave concerts, wrote band-pieces, and composed choir music until the position of court musician became vacant, to which he was immediately appointed, though at a very small salary. To add to his embarrassments, his young wife fell ill, and remained an invalid for a long while; but despite all his afflictions and wrongs, Mozart industriously pursued his profession and chased, with hope unabated, the elusive spirit of fortune. In 1786 the greatest opera he had yet written, "The Marriage of Figaro," was produced in Vienna, followed by "Don Giovanni" (Don Juan), given at Prague, 1787. Both operas were very great successes, but Mozart derived no profit from the latter, as he wrote it for the benefit of an old and indigent friend, who retained the copyright. Despite his popularity, it was Mozart's fate to remain a victim of poverty, deep and distressful. His salary was totally inadequate to his needs, for fame brings its responsibilities and burdens, which his income did not give him the ability to bear. In 1791 he wrote "The Magic Flute," and in July of the same year he received from an unknown source an order to write a requiem, and a commission to compose an opera for the coronation of Leopold II. The latter he executed, but his work on the Requiem progressed slowly, interrupted as it was by frequent fainting spells, which finally affected his mind and made him suspicious of even his friends. The last moments of Mozart were near at hand, when some of his admirers, Hungarian nobles, clubbed together to guarantee him a pension, and to buy whatever he might compose, but this charitable action came too late. His Requiem was almost finished, and seeing his rapidly failing condition a few friends appeared at his poor lodgings and expressed a desire to hear it. Mozart consented, and the parts of soprano, bass, and tenor were taken, to which Mozart attempted to add the alto, though his voice was very weak and his strength almost exhausted. Scarcely had the music begun when he fell back upon his pillow uttering the words, "Did I not tell you I was writing this Requiem for myself?" He did not rally again, but died peacefully a few hours later. His disease was malignant typhus, and his burial place was among the paupers in the churchyard of St. Marx. His actual grave no one knows, for it was unmarked, but near the supposed spot a splendid monument has been reared, the world's late recognition of one of its greatest geniuses. Mozart's musical works comprise twenty operas, five oratorios, fifty-nine arias, fifty-six pieces of church music, sixty vocal pieces for piano, forty-one symphonies, twenty-eight concertos, forty-nine pieces of chamber music, eighty-three sonatas and thirty-five small pieces.





W. W. LEEFVING-DOOG
-17

Marriage of Figaro

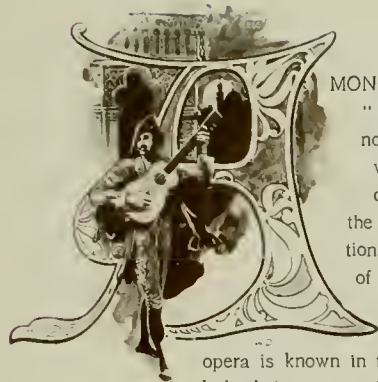
(AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING BY WILLIAM DE LEFTWICH DODGE)

THE COUNT—"Yes, he dies; there's naught can save him;
'Tis in vain my wrath he flies!
Ah! I know all!"

ACT I.—SCENE IX.

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO.

MUSIC BY MOZART.—WORDS BY DA PONTE.



AMONG the many musical creations of Mozart, all excellent, and not a few sublimely beautiful, his "Marriage of Figaro" is the most pronounced exhibition of his prodigious talent as a composer, notwithstanding it caused him the least effort to produce. This remarkably mellifluous work was written in an interval of six weeks, during which time, however, he was engaged on other compositions, so that he was not occupied more than three weeks with the actual score. When the opera was completed, Mozart discovered that two of his rivals had submitted operatic productions which the management of the Vienna theatre was preparing to give to the public in advance of his own, which so angered him that, though almost slavishly poor, he threatened to destroy the score unless his opera was given its initial representation forthwith. The manager reluctantly acceded to Mozart's dictatorial demand, and "Le Nozze di Figaro," by which the opera is known in the Italian, was accordingly produced May 1, 1786, and achieved an instantaneous success. Indeed, it was received with such enthusiasm that the Viennese lost their heads. The audience applauded the composer and actors until the theatre became a scene of wildest turbulence, and it was impossible for a long while to proceed with the performance. The situation was so remarkable, so tumultuous, so delirious, that the Emperor issued a decree suppressing the demonstration. When it was sung in Prague, a few months later, the same scenes were repeated, and on the streets little else was heard than selections from the opera; nor has its popularity diminished greatly since, though the admiration of audiences now is less noisily manifested.

The libretto of "Marriage of Figaro" is derived from Beaumarchais' comedy, arranged by Lorenzo da Ponte, who had the wisdom to omit the political references which had popularized the play in Paris. The text adaptation is a masterly piece of writing, so dexterously constructed that the comedy of intrigue, though often difficult, is unfailingly amusing without abatement of interest for an instant, and is so clearly indicated that an audience is easily able to follow all the ramifications of the plot.

The scene of the opera is laid at the chateau of Agnas Frescas, known as Count Almaviva, which is near the city of Seville, and the incidents may be thus hastily rehearsed: Figaro, a sprightly fellow, holding the post of valet to the count, is brought to the most embarrassing situations by reason of his station, as the play discloses. In the service of the countess is a comely maid named Susanna, for whom Figaro has formed a passionate, but honorable, attachment, which it is appointed shall ultimate in marriage on the following day; but Figaro is extremely solicitous, having discovered that the count has a secret admiration for Susanna, which threatens his prospective happiness. In the same household is a mischievous page named Cherubino, who though deeply attached to his mistress is so neglectful of the proprieties as to suffer himself to be caught by the count making love to Barbarina, a gardener's daughter, for which offence he is promptly dismissed by his master. Cherubino is conscious of the count's secret regard for Susanna, and he visits her to solicit her influence to secure

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"Then I gently raise the cover from the chair, and there discover—Cherubino!"

his reinstatement. While Cherubino is in the room, the count is heard approaching, whereupon with greatest haste Susanna hides the page behind an arm chair, from which place he hears the count declare his passion and offer

Susanna a handsome dowry if she will promise to meet him at a designated place in the evening. While the count is urging his suit, Basilio, the music teacher, enters, at which untoward interruption the count takes refuge

from view behind the arm chair, as Cherubino creeps around in front and manages to get into the chair unobserved, where he is covered by Susanna with a cloak. Basilio is also smitten by the charms of the beautiful maid, and proceeds to declare his love, in doing which he instances the attachment that Cherubino, although a page, has for the countess. This declaration so enrages the count that he rushes from his place of concealment and orders the immediate dismissal of Cherubino, whom by accident he discovers to be hidden in the chair. Upon second thought the count suppresses his anger, reflecting that Cherubino has heard his proposals to Susanna, and he conceives a plan of removing him from the country to avoid exposure of his acts and designs. This he accomplishes by giving Cherubino a commission in the army, and bids him hurry away to Seville to enter upon his military duties.

The count is released from one dilemma to be plunged at once into another, for as Cherubino goes away Figaro appears, accompanied by a host of villagers, and asks the count to consent to and confirm his marriage with Susanna. The count cannot refuse without disclosing his jealous reasons, but contrives to postpone the ceremony a few hours, and employs the interval in pressing his suit. The situation becomes known to Figaro, who, with the aid of Susanna and the countess, conceals a plot for the discomfiture of the count. In pursuance of this intrigue Figaro

addresses an anonymous note to the count, informing him that the countess has formed an attachment for a stranger, whom she has appointed

to clandestinely meet in the garden in the evening. But lest this clever intrigue should fail

of its purpose, Figaro adds a more seductive one, by declaring, in the letter, that Susanna has a mind to meet him in the garden also, as he requested. In carrying out this plot, Figaro induces Cherubino to delay his departure for Seville, and at the appointed time to dress in girl's clothing and personate Susanna in the proposed garden meeting. Cherubino goes to the countess' room to be arrayed in feminine finery, but scarcely does he begin to dress when the count is heard. Quickly Cherubino is locked in an adjoining room, while Susanna hides in an alcove, leaving the countess to receive the count, who angrily charges her with compromising his honor. During this stormy interview Cherubino accidentally knocks over a chair, which in his suspicious condition of mind causes the count to conclude that the page is in hiding, and he demands the key to the door that he may satisfy his belief. The countess vigorously denies her husband's accusations, but he cannot be mollified by her asseverations, and rudely seizing her hand he drags her away with him as he seeks some heavy instrument with which to break in the door. As the count goes out, Susanna issues from the alcove, and releasing Cherubino, who makes his escape by jumping into the garden, she takes his place in the room. The count soon returns with a crowbar, with which he forces the door, but only to discover—Susanna! The count is deeply mortified, for the situation is so embarrassing that he is forced to sue for pardon.

The discovery of Susanna, in a manner to cover him with confusion, makes the count sincerely repentant, and affairs are in an excellent way for a satisfactory conclusion, but for the complaints of Antonio, the gardener, who at the most opportune juncture to make trouble, comes to tell the count that some one, by jumping from a window of the house into his garden, has destroyed a quantity of his choicest flowers. This information serves to start afresh all the jealous fears the count has entertained, but Figaro disabuses his suspicions by declaring that it was he who jumped upon the flowers, in order to escape the count's anger. But thereupon Antonio adds again to the general distrust by handing to the count a note which he says he found under the window, thus precipitating a fresh cause for jealousy.



Yes, I see it plain, my treasure,—
How the hat sits well on you!"

The count upon examining the paper finds it to be Cherubino's commission, but the situation is again saved by the resourceful Figaro, who quickly explains that the commission has been given him to have the seal affixed. This speech again diverts all suspicion, and the countess and Susanna are thereby put into a congratulatory mood, when to the astonishment of all an old duenna, Marcellina, accompanied by Bartolo, enters, and charges Figaro with having given a written promise to marry her in the event that he shall fail to discharge, at a certain date, a loan obtained of her, and the time having expired she now demands fulfillment of his agreement. At this most unexpected turn of affairs the count betrays much satisfaction, and engages to see that Marcellina shall obtain justice.

The situation grows greatly complicated by the appearance of Marcellina, and there is much curiosity to know how such an affair may be untangled without the introduction of some unnatural action. This is accomplished, however, by a consistent development. Figaro proves to be the long-lost son of Marcellina, and this fact having been established to the great discomfiture of the count, the marriage of Figaro and Susanna is no longer opposed. But the plot is not yet fulfilled, as it is necessary, for a happy termination of the play, to reconcile the count and countess, which is brought about by having the countess assume a disguise and take the place of Susanna at the assignation in the garden, where she receives the ardent declarations of her husband. When his mistake is discovered, the count, thoroughly humbled, begs the grace of a pardon, and promises to be a devoted husband ever after.

The opening scene of the "Marriage of Figaro" represents a scantily furnished room, in the centre of which is a large arm chair. Figaro is busy measuring a space on the floor, while Susanna stands before a glass trying on the countess' hat and bestowing admiring expressions upon herself. The two sing a bantering rondo, followed by a recitative, of questioning and replying, as to the happiness which is in store for them, in the promise of their early marriage. Susanna presently tells Figaro that his lordship, the count, has grown weary in searching abroad for beauty, and has concluded to make his quest nearer home,—in fact, in his own castle,—and bids him guess upon whom the count's fancy has fallen. Figaro cannot solve so strange a riddle, whereupon Susanna admits that it is upon herself, and that it is because of such favor the count gives her such generous dowry. At this moment the bell rings, which summons Susanna to the countess, and Figaro is left alone to nurse his jealousies: "Bravo, my lord and master!" etc. Thereupon, to reassure his confidence, Figaro renders a rondo, "Haply your lordship," etc.

In the next scene Bartolo and Marcellina appear, followed by Susanna, who remains listening and undiscovered by the pair. Marcellina exhibits a contract, which Bartolo questions her about, asking why she has delayed urging its fulfillment until the day fixed for Figaro's marriage with Susanna? To this Marcellina makes answer that though 'tis late, the agreement must be enforced; but first it were better to disgrace the bride (Susanna). Can she be persuaded to scorn Almaviva (the count), then from disappointment he will assist their purpose and compel Figaro to marry her (Marcellina). Bartolo is much pleased with the scheme, and pledges himself to aid her plans; but in an aside expresses gratification at the prospect of foisting the antique duenna upon the man who stole his mistress from him. In an air vaunting his ambitions, he cheerily expresses: "I'll stop at nothing my purpose to carry," etc.

When Bartolo thus unbosoms his crafty design he departs, leaving Marcellina alone, who takes some credit for her own artfulness; but her speech is interrupted by the appearance of Susanna, who advances with ribbons, robe and head-dress in her hand. Instantly changing her measures with the hope of deceiving Susanna, Marcellina utters to herself, though loud enough for Susanna to hear, "Ah! what a priceless treasure Figaro is engaged to wed!" Whereupon the two render a duet of recrimination, which is comically pleasing, though betraying a mutual vexation and a disposition to jealous anger.



"My dearest old woman,
Don't vex yourself, I pray!"

In the succeeding scene Cherubino enters, as Marcellina takes her leave, and excitedly tells Susanna that this morning he was so unlucky as to be discovered by the count in company with Barbarina, for which offence he has been dismissed from service, and that his only hope now lies with the countess, whose intercession he will implore. Susanna professes great indignation that Cherubino should thus confess his passion for the countess, and an interesting scene takes place between the two, that is made particularly amusing by Cherubino singing an ardent composition of his own, "Ah, what feelings!" etc. The song is interrupted, when the two are most interested, by a loud knock at

the door. Cherubino quickly hides behind a chair, and the next scene introduces Count Almaviva, who, observing Susanna's agitation, asks the cause of her confusion, but before receiving a reply he seats himself, as if he has a mind to pay a protracted visit. Susanna, fearful that discovery of Cherubino's presence may be made, implores the count to leave, but he is deaf to her entreaties, having come upon a lover's mission, and is determined to make his declaration. She impatiently urges him to depart, but taking courage at every fresh repulse, he presently avows his love for her, which he has already commissioned Basilio to confess, and beseeches of her a promise to meet him in the orange bower in the evening, when he will reward her with proofs of his devotion. In the midst of his protestations, the count is startled by the voice of Basilio without, who speaking to the servant in a loud voice utters, "With my lady, perhaps; there will I seek him." This prospect of discovery causes confusion dire confounded. The count begs that the intruder be sent away quickly, but Susanna is helpless in her assumed distress and exclaims: "Ah me! I am ruined!" The count, unable to make his escape, tries to hide behind the chair, but Susanna interposes in a manner that gives Cherubino opportunity to slip around the chair and seat himself therein, where he is hidden by a dress which she hurriedly throws over him.

Basilio enters, in the next scene, and saluting Susanna asks if she has seen his lordship this morning, at which question she exhibits indignation, and calls him a booby, who had better begone. Basilio seeks to calm her impatience and then proceeds to execute his lordship's commission as a proxy lover, reminding her of the count's exalted birth, whose devotion is much to be preferred to that of a beardless page.

Susanna is so far from being flattered by this proposal that she makes a

vixenish show of her temper, which breaks into fiercer anger when

Basilio discloses that Cherubino was observed this morning lurking in the

passage before her room. She calls him malicious wretch and slanderer, but is persuaded to hold her resentment when Basilio tells her Cherubino was heard singing in her room, and that he is such an incautious youth as betrays his passion even at the table—for the countess! "Ah!" he continues, "should the count observe it, being a very suspicious man, he would play the devil."

This speech so disturbs the count that he is unable to repress his indignation and comes forth from hiding to inquire about the scandal that involves the countess. Thereupon, in a spirited terzetto, the three indulge in recriminations and excuses, until Susanna pretends to faint, but when the two proffer their aid she suddenly revives to renew her abuse. Basilio, finding that the count has developed grave suspicions by having overheard his statements respecting the page, tries to correct the evil he has unconsciously incited by declaring: "What I hinted of the page," etc. But the count cannot be deceived, and telling how he discovered the crafty Cherubino upon another occasion making love to Barbarina, he



"Hold, gallant captain,
I wish to give a word of advice, sir!"

imitates the means of his previous detection by lifting the dress from the chair, when, behold! to the dismay of all, the luckless page is revealed. Susanna, true to feminine instincts, becomes almost hysterical, and the count carried away by his wrath is about to inflict a punishment upon Cherubino, when by good chance he remembers that the page has overheard his protestations to Susanna, and wisely concludes to adopt a more conciliatory course.

At this juncture Figaro comes upon the scene, as the count rudely pushes Cherubino out of the chair, calling him a little serpent. When the others beg that he be merciful to so young a stripling, the count allows his anger to cool somewhat, and Cherubino makes an attempt to embrace Susanna before taking his departure. Figaro, however, a little jealous of even a youth's attention to the woman he loves, intercepts the page under pretence of imparting a word of advice, and thereupon he renders a pretty air: "Play no more, boy, the part of a lover," etc.

The succeeding scene takes place in a beautiful chamber, that has an alcove on the side. The countess is seated, and as Susanna enters she is told to proceed with her story, of how the count has sought to beguile her with his profession of love. Susanna protests that the count has not been guilty of such perfidious conduct, and that his visit to her was made with no other purpose than to announce his desire to be present at her approaching marriage to Figaro. The countess is thereby somewhat reassured, but expresses belief that she is no longer beloved and that all modern husbands are both faithless and jealous.

As the two ladies are thus discussing their serious affairs, Figaro enters singing, and being welcomed he contrives a plan by which he hopes to cure the count's infatuation, and his jealousy as well. This project he proposes by explaining that through Basilio he has sent the count a letter making an assignation with Susanna in the evening. The countess is at first indignant that Susanna should consent to so compromise herself, but Susanna, more artful, embraces the proposal, and offers to send old Marcellina in her stead. Figaro is not quite satisfied with this plan and suggests that he should tell his lordship that Susanna will meet him in the garden at nightfall, but that Cherubino shall be sent to take her place, masked in female habit, and when his villainy shall by this means be exposed he prophesies that the count will thereafter consent to any compromise. The strategy meets with much favor from the ladies, who promise their assistance to its fulfillment, and Figaro departs upon his deceitful mission as Cherubino appears hailed by Susanna as a chivalrous commander. Cherubino is little pleased at a reminder of his dismissal as page, and his appointment to a military position that requires him to leave his kind protectress—the countess. Susanna makes sport of his passion, of his sighing and his fears, but requests him to show his deep regard for the countess by singing the ballad with which he had favored her during the morning. The countess increases his confusion by asking who wrote the song, and begging Susanna take her guitar "and play to our minstrel's singing." Cherubino confesses that he is all of a tremble, but will be obedient to his lady's will, at which Susanna mockingly banters, "Poor little boy!—Oh, yes, my lady wills." Thus coaxed and ridiculed the love-lorn page dolefully sings: "What is this feeling makes me so sad?" etc.

When the song is concluded Susanna bids him "Come you hither, my soldier. Figaro has told you?" "Everything," he replies; whereupon she measures him, and then begins to array him in her clothes.

Susanna, at the countess' suggestion, fastens the door and then proceeds with the dressing, but discovers Cherubino's commission, to which the count, in his hurry to get him out of the country, has forgotten to attach the necessary seal. This discovery furnishes a pretext for more persiflage, and then Susanna commanding him to kneel before her places her cap upon his head, thus completing his attire as a comely young girl. While adjusting the cap Susanna renders a coquettish air, which concludes with the words: "The rogue looks so demurely he'll win each maiden, surely," etc.

As the toilet is finished, and Susanna departs with Cherubino's mantle, a knock is heard at the door, followed by an exclamation from the count, and a demand to know why the door is locked. Great confusion ensues, the countess believing discovery to be inevitable, which in the count's present jealous condition of mind,



"It's a spatula on the right arm printed.
Ye powers! 'tis he, then!"

must mean ruin and possibly violence. Cherubino takes refuge within the cabinet, where the countess hastily locks him in and then with much agitation admits her husband, the count, who accuses her of some misdoing, of which he requires explanation. She excuses the condition of the room and the locked door by telling him she has been most busily engaged arranging certain dresses, at which Susanna was assisting until hearing his voice she has retired to her chamber. The count perceives that she is not yet composed.

"Yes, Signor! Is that so confounding?"

diverted from his revengeful intent, and his suspicions increasing his anger becomes so towering that the countess, fearful that a dreadful tragedy will be the result of this unfortunate escapade, tearfully entreats: "Spare him, pray, at my request!" etc. The expostulations and implorations of the countess being vain, she reluctantly surrenders to him the key, lest the door be broken, which he eagerly seizes and excitedly places in the lock, fiercely exclaiming: "Yes, he dies; there's naught can save him!" etc.

The countess, overwhelmed with shame, and fearing that a crime is about to be committed, flings herself upon the sofa as the door is opened, when to the amazement and utter confusion of the count, Susanna steps forth and ironically suggests that he examine the cabinet, where he may yet find some poor page concealed, which the count, to cover his confusion, immediately does. As the count disappears for the moment, opportunity is given Susanna to explain to the countess how Cherubino has made his escape, thus saving them from the shame of an exposure. When the count reappears the two ladies berate and ridicule him until he confesses his offending and abjectly sues for pardon, which his wife finally condescends to grant; but gives him no better reply to his inquiry why she had sought to make him believe that Cherubino was in the cabinet than to flippantly tell him it was all a joke.



the writer. He denies knowledge of it or the sender. The count, countess and Susanna tell him that he may now speak the truth without fear, and urge frank confession, but he cannot be induced to acknowledge its authorship, fearing that some deceit is about to be played upon him. The count would in turn play a trick upon Figaro, and has abetted Marcellina, an old duenna, in her designs upon him; she holds a contract which binds Figaro to marry her in the event of his failure to pay her at a fixed date a certain sum of money, which is now due. The count is wondering what detains Marcellina, when Antonio, the gardener, enters intoxicated, carrying a pot of broken flowers, and holding them up to view, protests: "From that window, upon all my flowers," etc.

This complaint of the gardener excites anew the count's suspicion. He learns that the flowers thus destroyed were immediately beneath the window, and Antonio is careful to tell him that the damage was done by some one leaping therefrom, which the count quickly concludes must have been Cherubino. The ladies and Figaro try in vain to discredit Antonio as a drunken vagabond, which accusing serves rather to confirm the count's suspicion that the three have plotted to dishonor him and to save Cherubino from his just vengeance. To divert the count's mistrust, and quell his rising anger, Figaro confesses that Antonio speaks the truth; that a man did leap from the window of this house upon the flowers, and that such person was no other than himself. The count is surprised, and old Antonio gives expression to his doubts by remarking that the one whom he saw descending from the window was neither so tall nor in any wise resembled Figaro, but one who seemed in fact a little boy. A humorous passage of words takes place, but Figaro is so artful with his explanations that he presently satisfies the count's suspicions by an excuse that, afraid of being detected by his lordship in a visit he had made to Susanna, he had precipitately escaped by the only avenue open to him, and was so unlucky as to sprain his ankle in the fall.

The affair might have terminated happily had not Antonio been less disposed than the count to be content with improbable explanations, and he therefore plunges Figaro, the countess and Susanna into fresh difficulties by producing a folded packet and tendering it to Figaro, saying: "I suppose, then, these papers have fallen from your pocket." The count seizes the papers, all his suspicions renewing, and a hasty examination discloses that one of them is Cherubino's commission. Figaro is for the moment distracted, but his quick wit returns in time to save the countess from scandal and himself from discredit. With a look of pleased astonishment, quite recovered from his confusion, he plausibly explains that Cherubino, being unable to return himself for the purpose, gave him the commission with request that he have the necessary seal attached. The count is somewhat mollified, but not fully content, for he pronounces this amazing continuity of compromising events as a riddle past his solving.

At this moment Marcellina, Basilio and Bartolo enter, who fall to praying the count to grant them justice, an inopportune interruption that disturbs all alike, but their importunities compel attention. Marcellina petitions the count for judgment against Figaro, who has broken his promise to marry her as a forfeit for his failure to pay her a sum of money expressed in his note of hand. Susanna, Figaro and the countess protest, but the count has a mind to judge the case and willingly hears the evidence. Basilio testifies of his knowledge as to the agreement, and produces the written contract, which furnishes the climax for Act I, that concludes with a concerted finale.

Act II opens with a scene which represents the count seated in his study, downcast with a deep perplexity at the events of the day, —as much concerned for the intrigues which threaten him with exposure, as for the jealous misgivings which have been aroused by Cherubino's adventures. While he is thus absorbed with conflicting reflections, Susanna timidly approaches, excusing her entrance by



"Gentle lady, take these flowers which in humble love we bring."

saying she has been sent by the countess to bring her smelling-bottle. She would immediately retire, but is detained by the count, who is disposed to taunt her upon the prospect of losing her husband upon the day of marriage. She tartly rejoins, "By giving to Marcellina the dowry you promised to Susanna?"

The count confesses that he made such a promise, but that it was upon condition that she listen to his wishes, one of which is that she shall meet him in the garden this very evening, a condition which she accepts; thereupon the two express their feelings in a pretty duet: "What transport now is flying," etc. They are each content with their victory, he at subduing, she at outwitting, and the count retires with a chuckle of satisfaction as Figaro appears. She greets him gleefully, and exults in her strategy, whereby she has secured from the count the money that will purchase Figaro's release, but speaks so loud that the count overhears her. It is now his turn to play the pair a pretty trick, which he resolves to do by encouraging Antonio, uncle of Susanna, to refuse to give her hand in marriage. The idea so pleases him that he felicitates himself in an air of grand conceit: "Beware, my treacherous beauty," etc.

Scarcely is the count's happy song rendered when Don Curzio, Marcellina, Bartolo and Figaro appear, the former consoling Marcellina with the assurance that Figaro must either pay his forfeit or wed her, a judgment which the count confirms. Figaro's wit stands him in good stead at this critical juncture, for having neither the mind to wed Marcellina, nor the money to pay her, he meets their urgings of fulfillment of the agreement by gravely telling them that being well-born he cannot contract a marriage without the consent of his illustrious parents. The count flaunts the claim, and Don Curzio demands his testimonials, whereupon Figaro relates that it was his evil fortune to be stolen when an infant, and the rich jewels and laces on his person were taken that he might appear as a beggar child. This much he professes to remember, as proof that he is of noble extraction, but while these are only dim remembrances, another mark exists which may serve to establish his identity, a hieroglyph, as he calls it, impressed upon his right arm, and thereupon, turning up his sleeve, he exposes the design of a spatula. At sight of this birth-mark, Marcellina utters a cry of astonishment, for she perceives in it the indubitable proof that Figaro is her long-lost son, and then eagerly tells him that Bartolo is his father, whereupon the three embrace.

In the midst of this joyful discovery, which releases Figaro from his obligation, and results in his finding a mother where he had fears of being forced to marry a duenna, Susanna enters with purse in hand and stops the count, who greatly angered over his discomfiture is about to quit the room. Susanna offers to pay Figaro's marriage fine, but at the moment observing her lover in the embrace of Marcellina, she expresses her indignation at what she believes to be Figaro's perfidy. He begs her to hear his explanation, but she gives him a rousing box on the ear for his pains; her anger is presently mollified, however, when she learns that Marcellina is indeed Figaro's mother, which is still better proved when she calls him son, and grants a quittance of his obligation, as a marriage portion. Figaro is now quite overwhelmed with gifts, for Susanna bestows the purse of gold she has obtained from the count, and Bartolo adds a sum as a measure of his gladness at seeing his son secure so charming a lady as Susanna for wife. There is a general feeling of satisfaction manifested by all present save the count and his lawyer, who having been disconcerted withdraw in anger, followed soon after by all the rest.

Scarcely have the company retired when the countess enters on a quest of Susanna, all anxiety to know how the count will receive the proposition at the appointed interview in the garden, but yet fearing the result.



"What smooth and taper fingers!
Like those with which Aurora
Lifts up the veil of twilight!"

After singing a plaintive solo, descriptive of her disappointments, the countess retires as the count comes in, followed by Antonio, who has Cherubino's military hat in his hand, and presents it to the count as an evidence that the owner must be somewhere in the castle. The count expresses incredulity, believing that Cherubino is far away, no doubt in Seville, whither he has been sent. Antonio answers in a manner that arouses the count's jealousy afresh, and together they rush off to catch the adventurous youth.

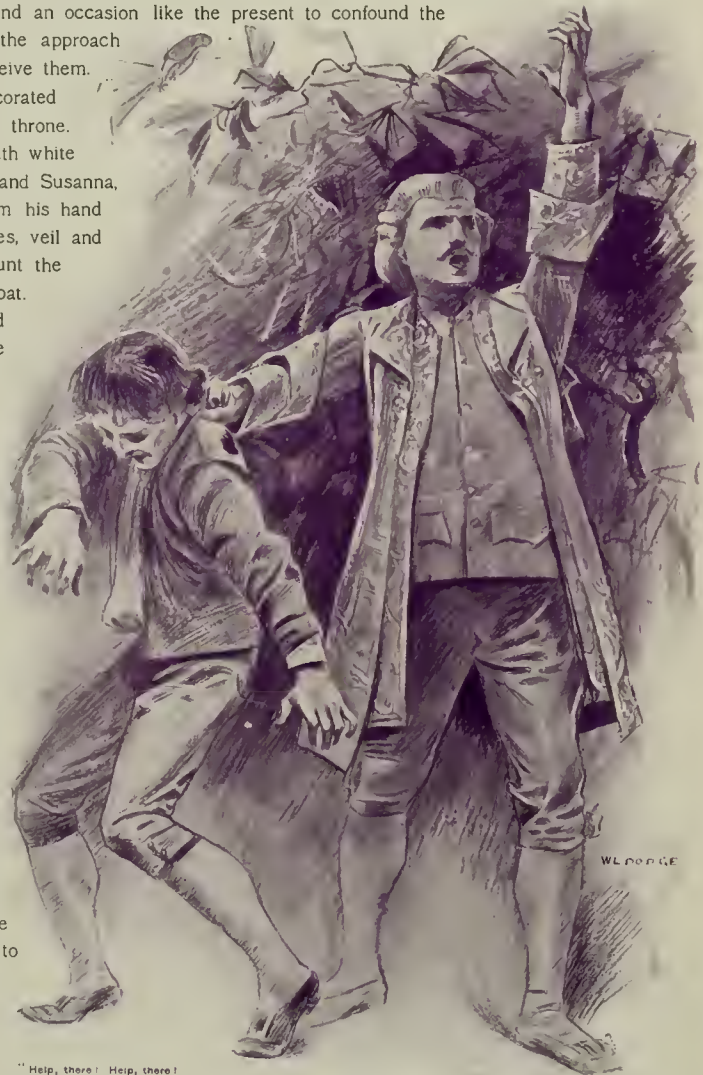
Again the countess appears, this time with Susanna, whom she eagerly questions as to her arrangements for meeting with the count, which Susanna assures her have not yet been definitely made, but may readily be settled, as he has promised to meet her in the garden. Thereupon the countess bids Susanna write a letter to the count appointing the place and hour of their meeting, which note is to be fastened by a needle, and the count is to be directed to return it as a token of understanding. A beautiful duet, "The Zephyr," follows, while the letter is being written, and as it is finished and secreted in Susanna's bosom, a company of girls come into the room bearing nosegays for the countess, among whom is Cherubino, in disguise, and Barbarina, who sing a presentation duet, which so pleases the countess that she rewards the yet undiscovered page with a kiss. A moment after, the count and Antonio enter hastily and hotly; the former being quick to detect the youth, despite his female disguise, jerks off his bonnet and replaces it with the military hat, thus completely unmasking him. Great excitement ensues, and the count threatens much mischief, but when about to make a violent display of his indignation, his arm is arrested by the opportune appearance of Figaro, who, greeting the girls, invites them to dance, and notwithstanding his lame ankle, he leads them away, leaving the count and countess alone. The count is in a furious humor, and is pleased to find an occasion like the present to confound the countess with accusation, but scarcely are they seated when the approach of the wedding party admonishes them to prepare quickly to receive them.

The following scene is played in a splendid salon, decorated for the marriage festival, and the count appears seated on a throne. A party of country girls enter bearing a virginal hat adorned with white feathers. Following these are Bartolo and Figaro; then Antonio and Susanna, who advance, and she kneels before the count, to receive from his hand the bridal wreath. At the moment the count presents the gloves, veil and nosegay, as the chorus sing, she contrives to slyly give the count the letter she has prepared, which he dexterously hides in his waistcoat. Figaro then receives Susanna from the hand of the count and withdraws to the other side of the room near Marcellina, at the same time giving the signal for a merry dance.

The count is eager to know the contents of the note, and in his hurry to open it pricks his finger sharply with the needle and cries out in pain, but a moment later he discovers why the letter was thus fastened, and betrays his great delight with many smiles that exhibit his anticipations. When he has read the note the count looks again for the needle, which has fallen meantime, and requires that his lordship shall condescend to search the floor sharply in order to recover it.

Figaro, having a nimble wit, divines by his actions that the count has received a love-letter, and Susanna confirms his suspicions by telling him the truth, except she does not reveal her own connection with the epistle. The count finds the needle, after a patient search, and then dismisses the company, with an invitation to the marriage feast, whereupon the chorus resume and file out of the room.

The third scene takes place in the count's study, Barbarina being first to enter, singing a small air as she searches for a needle, which she has lost, and which the count has requested her to carry to Susanna, followed by Figaro and Marcellina. Figaro has become suspicious of his bride over the affair of the needle, and as Barbarina goes out he resolves to betake himself to



"Help, there! Help, there!
Vassals! servants!"

the garden, where he is sure a meeting between the count and Susanna has been appointed. Marcellina counsels coolness and reminds him that he does not yet know the secret object of his wife; but Figaro is impetuous in his jealousy, and declares he will vindicate the rights of husbands.

Scene IV represents a garden with pavilions on the side, in which Figaro is seen lurking, and fortifying his courage by singing of the part he is playing as the suspicious and cheated husband. Hearing voices he hastily hides, as Susanna, the countess and Marcellina appear. The evening is so far advanced that darkness prevents Figaro from perceiving that Susanna and the countess have changed their garments, nor does he suspect that they are aware of his presence, though they are fully advised. To torment his jealousy, Susanna renders a recitative and air, "Ah, why so long delay," which has the desired effect, for Figaro is beside himself with rage, uttering from behind his screen: "Horrible! I scarcely can believe my senses! Am I awake, or dreaming?" When Susanna has concluded her song, and Marcellina and the countess have concealed themselves under the pavilions, Cherubino comes upon the scene, where first observing the countess, in the uncertain light, and her changed apparel, he mistakes her for Susanna, and with his accustomed ardor for love-making, endeavors to steal a kiss. But at this most critical juncture the count appears and anticipates the ardent youth by aiming a blow at him, which unluckily Figaro receives as he steps from his place of concealment. Cherubino makes good his escape, and the count, making no doubt that the lady is Susanna, faithful to her appointment, pours forth his passion and places a diamond ring upon her finger as a token of his affectionate favor. The countess receives these protestations without discovering to the count his mistake, which ludicrous performance is watched by Figaro and Susanna with the keenest interest from their respective hiding places.

The delightful diversion, made possible by a chain of laughter-provoking mistakes, in which several are made to appear ridiculous, is interrupted by the sound of footsteps, at which the countess startles and flees to the cover of the pavilion, while the count passes out to ascertain, if possible, who is the intruder.

As quickly as the count disappears, Susanna emerges from her place of refuge and is seen by Figaro, who at first believes her to be the countess, but very soon recognizes her, even in her borrowed garments, and is made intensely happy by her explanation that her part in the affair is to help the countess punish her faithless husband. The humiliation of the count is near at hand, to accomplish which Figaro lends his efforts in his usually artful manner. When the count is heard returning, Figaro plays well his part by falling upon his knees before Susanna, who still masks as the countess, and in a loud voice protests his love; overhearing which, and thinking he has discovered a compromising situation, the count furiously calls for a light. Immediately a host of people rush out, and the count discovers in the pavilion Cherubino, Marcellina, and the countess, he mistaking the latter for Susanna. Before expending his ire in violence upon his suspected wife the count is horrified by the appearance of the real countess, and discovers that he is victim of a dreadful mistake. He is relieved, however, to find the countess above suspicion, and humbly sues for pardon, confessing the justice of his humiliation. The situation, so complicated before, is now adjusted to the satisfaction of everybody, and the happy ending is celebrated by a joyful song, in which all join as the curtain falls.







Aida

(AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING BY WILLIAM DE LEFTWICH DODGE)

AIDA—*"But tell me, by what route shall we avoid the armed hosts?"*

RADAMES—*"The route will be deserted till to-morrow, when it will be by
Napata."*

ACT III

AIDA.

MUSIC BY GIUSEPPE VERDI.—WORDS BY M. DE LOCLE.



HERE has been no opera produced within the past quarter of a century that contains so many features of what may be denominated sublime excellence as that of "Aida," which represents the master composer of the period at the fullness of his power, the acme of his musical genius. This popular opera was written upon the order of Ismail Pacha, Khedive of Egypt, whose princely dilettantism almost rivaled that of Ludwig II, King of Bavaria, to whose patronage Wagner owed much of his success. The Khedive built a magnificent opera house in Cairo, which he desired to dedicate in an imposing manner, to accomplish which purpose he commissioned Verdi to compose the score of an opera suggested by Mariette Bey, director of the Museum at Boulak, and recognized as the greatest Egyptologist of the century. The story had in fact been written by him, from a very ancient manuscript, discovered during his researches, which was readily adaptable to operatic treatment, a work that was successfully accomplished by M. Camille de Locle, a French poet of no small talent. In this poetic form the story was submitted to Signor A. Ghizlandoni for translation into the Italian, and being presented to Verdi, the distinguished maestro immediately recognized the power, beauty, and effectiveness of the composition, and its peculiar fitness for lyrical essay. An agreement was quickly made, by which Verdi was to write the score for the sum of \$25,000, the rights of production to remain his own in all countries except in Egypt. The terms having been arranged, Verdi began the work with great enthusiasm, stimulated thereto less by the pay than by the encouragement which the libretto inspired, for the subject appealed with special force to his sentiments and aspirations. When the score was

completed, however, an obstacle interposed which neither Verdi nor the Khedive anticipated. It had not occurred to Verdi, so intense had been his occupation, that an expanse of sea, always treacherous, and often tumultuous, lay between Italy and Egypt. The Khedive expected, of course, that Verdi would conduct both the rehearsals and the representation, but he was doomed to disappointment, for the composer could not conquer his repugnance to a voyage and his dread of seasickness, by which unhappy chance another director had to be secured, thus detracting greatly from the memorableness of the occasion. But notwithstanding this misfortune—we can call it nothing less—all the seats were sold several months in advance of the initial performance, which took place on the evening of December 27, 1871, before one of the largest and most distinguished audiences that ever assembled upon a like occasion. The costumes and scenery were designed under the direction of Mariette Bey in order that historic accuracy might be observed, but were made in Paris; and it happened that the work had to be done during the siege of that city, which not only caused much delay but when finally finished infinite difficulty was experienced in getting them out of Paris for shipment to Cairo. This was overcome only through the influence of the Khedive, and after considerable diplomatic correspondence.

"Aida" is unquestionably the greatest, probably the best, of Verdi's compositions. The music is marvelously rich, even to realism, radiant with sunshine of the tropics, redolent of perfume of the lotus, sensuous of the dreamy luxury of an opulent people; weird, solemn, mysterious, in its invocation of priests, hallelujah of chorus, echo of mystic temple, and the hollow resonance of vaulted tomb. It is distinctly Italian, and wholly original, abounding in local color, and is remarkable for its natural interpretation. The consecration of Radames is particularly effective by the introduction of oriental tunes that are charming beyond what was believed to be within the power of instruments to produce. Scarcely less picturesque and fascinating is the enrapturing love scene in the third act, which exhibits a voluptuous display that the music feelingly translates and profoundly impresses with moving sympathy. The scenic effects, which the palm-clad sacred island of Philæ, and the azure



AMNERIS, PRINCESS OF EGYPT

bosom of the sleeping Nile, are no more beautiful than is the dreamy music that encourages the imagination, and imparts to the picture a glow that warms and intoxicates the senses.

Verdi's genius to interpret and to impress sentiment, impulse, character, is shown again in the fourth act, where, in the judgment of Radames, the dirge of priests pronouncing doom rolls through the subterranean hall and meets the passionate wailings of Amneris on the threshold, the music being so marvelously tempered to the situation that the scene is made one of exquisite realism, moving the audience to uncontrollable sympathy.

The action of the opera takes place at Memphis, Thebes, and Philæ, where temples were dedicated to the worship of Isis, of the Pharaohic period, in the time of the Hyksos, or shepherd kings, who ruled in Ethiopia and finally became so powerful as to overthrow the Pharaohs. The story may be thus briefly told: Aïda, the heroine, is daughter of Amonasro, an Ethiopic king; by some mischance of war she has become the booty of Egyptians, by whom she is held a slave.

Unlike other slaves, however, she is allowed many liberties, and being in service at the king's palace a secret attachment is formed between herself and Radames, a captain of the king's guard, who is loved by Amneris, daughter of the Egyptian sovereign. Amneris does not feel sure of Radames' affections, but is unable to discover who her rival may be, until he returns from a victorious campaign against the Ethiopians, bringing back to Egypt many prisoners, among whom is Amonasro, king of that people.

It is in the second act that Amneris, the princess, forces from Aïda, the slave, the secret of her passion, by telling her that Radames has been killed. A fuller force of this discovery falls upon Amneris when Radames pleads with his king to spare the lives of his captives. A warrior so great deserves the highest reward, and this the king of Egypt resolves to bestow by granting the request of Radames, save that while giving liberty to all the other prisoners, the king declines to release Amonasro and Aïda, but offers the hand of Amneris to the unwilling victor.

In the following act her father persuades Aïda to exercise her arts upon Radames, and to influence him to turn traitor to Egypt and join his fortunes with the Ethiopians. This after a struggle with her conscience she consents to do, and at their next meeting the beautiful Aïda so beguiles her lover that he consents to fly with her. This conversation is overheard by

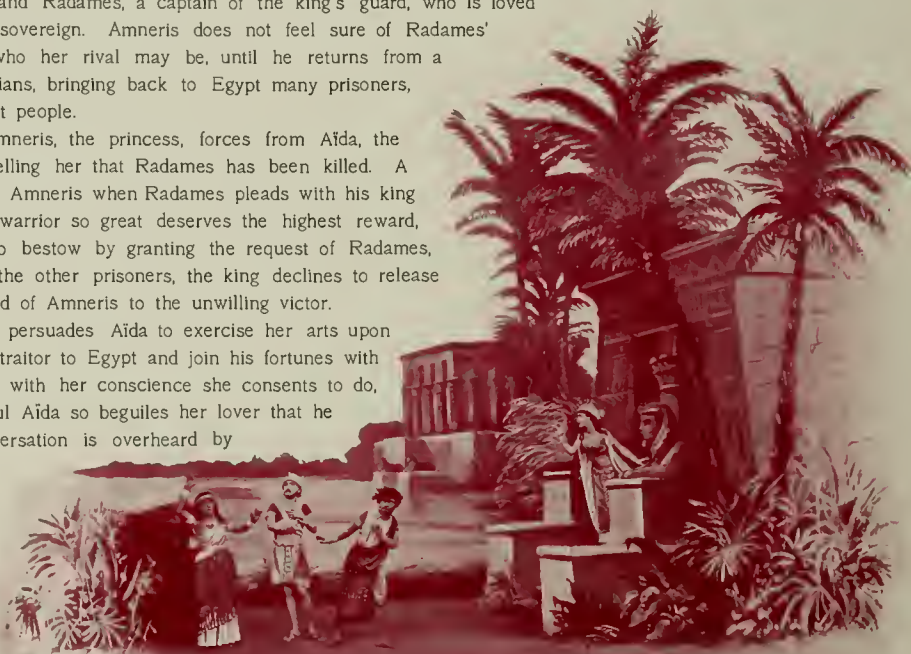
Amneris and the high priest, who rush out of the temple and denounce him as traitor to his country, and enemy of his king. In the confusion that ensues, Aïda and her father make their escape, but the valiant soldier, not yet conscious of the crime which his consent to flee with the woman he loves involves, suffers himself to be made

a prisoner. His trial follows speedily upon

the charge of treason, of which he is convicted and he is condemned to be buried alive in the vaults under the temple of

the god Phtah. When his doom is about to be executed the Egyptian king offers him a pardon if he will marry Amneris, but he refuses to thus tarnish his honor, and goes a submissive victim to the living tomb. When the stones are sealed above him, Radames discovers, to his astonishment, that there is another tenant of his grave, and investigation reveals that it is Aïda, who has preceded him, resolved to perish with him, considering that even the tomb were heaven to her when shared by one she loves so passionately. The concluding scene represents Amneris, heart-broken over the tragedy which her jealousy has instigated, kneeling on the stone which closes the vault, addressing a prayer to Isis that the dying lovers may find eternal bliss.

Act I.—The opening scene represents a hall in the king's palace at Memphis, showing temples and pyramids in the distance. A beautiful orchestral prelude in pianissimo movement, executed chiefly on violins, serves as an introduction to the appearance of Radames and Ramphis, a priest, who in a dialogue disclose that an invasion of Egypt is threatened by the Ethiopians, and that the sacred Isis has been consulted as to who shall be leader of the Egyptian troops. As



"For thee to betray my country! I am dishonored!"

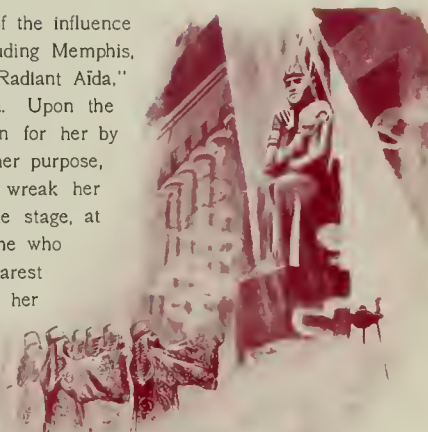
Ramphis goes out Radames day-dreams of victory gained over enemies of the nation, and of the influence and glory that may be his should he return crowned with laurel and be welcomed by applauding Memphis, and especially by Aida, for whose favors his ambition is greatest. In a sweet romanza, "Radiant Aida," a solo as exquisite in melody as it is in versification, he pours out his soulful admiration. Upon the entrance of Amneris, a declamatory duet follows, in which she strives to excite his passion for her by intimating that preferments are within her power to bestow. When he affects to ignore her purpose, she shows her jealous misgivings, that he has a hidden love for another, and threatens to wreak her ire upon such an one if she shall be discovered. At this moment Aida comes upon the stage, at sight of whom Radames is so startled that a dread suspicion seizes Amneris that it may be she who is object of his affections; but Amneris dissembles her jealous fears and in a trio, "Come, dearest friend," the three reveal their sentiments: Amneris professing friendship, Aida longings for her native land, and Radames his warlike ambitions.

Scene II—In the next scene the king of Egypt appears, preceded by the royal guards and followed by Ramphis, the high priest, and by ministers, priests, captains, messenger, etc., that are greeted with a martial chorus. The king gravely announces that a messenger just arrived from the confines of Ethiopia brings evil news, who at command advances and reports that Egypt has been invaded by an army of Ethiopians which, led by a fierce and indomitable warrior, Amonasro, and emboldened by easy victories, is now marching upon Thebes, whose people are already in arms to stoutly oppose the barbarous enemy. Aida shudders at the mention of her father's name, but tries to disguise her trepidation. The voices of those about the king are vociferous for war! war! which loyal spirit he commends and designates Radames as the leader—named by the oracle of Isis—of his troops. Radames pauses to thank the gods for this answer to his prayers, and then receives instructions from the king to repair to the Temple of Vulcan, and there arm himself with the sacred weapons. The greatest enthusiasm is manifested, which culminates in Amneris bringing a banner and consigning it to Radames as a gonfalon to lead his troops to victory. When in the joy of his realized ambitions Radames receives the royal standard, and promises to carry

it triumphantly against the foes of Egypt, Aida, unable longer to disguise her despair, falls to weeping, and in an outburst of her anguish she bewails:

"For whom do I weep? For whom do I pray?
What power binds me to him?
I must love him! And this man
Is an enemy—of my country!"

The king, retinue, warriors and people pass out of the hall shouting their war-cries, and bidding Radames to go forth in strength and to return a conqueror, thus leaving Aida alone. She gives expression to her griefs and conflicting emotions in a recitative of great power, picturing to herself the evils that may come upon her country, and the perils that may befall her father in a conflict waged by enemies commanded by the man she loves! Unable to repress her fears,



"To die! So pure and beautiful! To die for love of me!"



SLAVE GIRLS ADORNING AMNERIS FOR THE TRIUMPHAL FESTIVAL.

which alternate between love of Radames and devotion to her father; first lamenting for her country, she addresses an appeal to heaven in a flowing cantabile of exquisite sympathy:

"Pity, kind heaven; to thee I fly;
Hope there is none in this my woe.
Oh! fatal love, thy power I know,
Break, thou my heart, cause me to die."

Scene III is remarkable for its barbaric richness of display, and the marvelous coloring that is lent by the introduction of chanting priests and carved images. The representation is of the interior of the Temple of Vulcan, at Memphis, illuminated by a mysterious light diffused from above, by which is shown a long receding row of Egyptian columns and statues of deities. In the middle centre of the temple, on a carpet-covered platform, is the altar, surmounted by sacred emblems, and at the corners are golden tripods from which the smoke of incense issues. In this splendid interior are assembled many priests and priestesses, the latter from behind the scene playing on golden harps, while the former chant orisons and invoke the aid of Phtah. Radames enters, whose appearance is hailed and welcomed by priestesses executing the sacred dance. As he advances towards the altar, Ramphis, the high priest, places a silver veil over his head, and in the name of the gods pronounces his selection to lead the hosts of Egypt against enemies of the nation, at which Radames promises to devote his services to the protection and defence of the sacred soil of Egypt. The ceremony of investiture concludes with bestowal upon Radames of the consecrated armor, and rendering of a religious hymn, and the mystic dance by priests and priestesses.

Act II, Scene I, introduces a female chorus in a hall in the apartments of Amneris, the princess being attended by female slaves who adorn her for a festival. Aromatic perfumes rise from tripods, and Moorish boys agitate the air above her head with large feather fans. The chorus sing praises of her glory and prophesy the overthrow of all enemies of Egypt, but Amneris is weary of flattery and her heart is heavy with suspicion that she has been supplanted in the affections of Radames by Aïda, the princess' slave. The approach of Aïda is presently announced, at which all the slaves withdraw to a distance, and Amneris receives her with feigned affection, saying:

"Poor Aïda. The grief
Which weighs down thy heart I share with thee.
I am thy friend;
Thou shalt have all from me—thou shalt be happy!"

These consoling assurances fall of their purpose to soothe the sorrowful Aïda, who asks how it is possible to be happy while detained a captive far from her native home, and unable to know the fate of her father and brothers. To these desponding words Amneris replies with renewed expressions of her sympathies, and begs her to take courage, since time may be depended upon to heal all ills of this world, and that anguish of the heart may be cured by the god of love. This interview is followed by an exquisite duet, "Oh, love immortal!" in which Aïda discovers to Amneris her passion for Radames, and at the terrible threatenings of the furiously jealous princess Aïda implores for mercy:

"Ah, pity! What more remains to me?
My life is a desert;
Live and reign, thy rage
I will quickly appease.
This love that angers thee
In the tomb I will extinguish."

Scene II.—Martial strains are heard that proclaim the returning conqueror. Entrance to the city of Thebes is shown, with the great temple of Ammon on the right, and



TRIUMPHAL ENTRANCE OF EGYPTIAN TROOPS INTO THE CITY OF THEBES

on the left a splendid throne under a purple canopy, with a triumphal arch in the background. The king of Egypt appears, followed by ministers, priests, fan-bearers, and soldiers, and as he seats himself the people lift up their voices in a song of jubilation for victory and in praise for the victors. While the women and priests are

thus glorifying the king and returning heroes, Amneris appears, with Aida, and seats herself to the left of her royal father. At a sound of trumpets, the victorious Egyptian troops enter and defile before the king, followed by war-chariots, ensigns, bearers of the sacred vases, and a troop of dancing girls carrying trophies of treasure ravished from the defeated enemy. Lastly, Radames comes upon the scene, under a canopy borne by twelve of his captains. As he arrives before the throne, the king descends and gratefully embracing him as saviour of his country, orders that Amneris, with her own hand, shall place upon his head the triumphal crown. This honor the king would add to by conferring others that Radames might prefer. "Now ask of me what thou most wishest; nothing shall be denied to thee."

Radames is flushed with victory and appreciative of the mighty favors the king so graciously bestows, but love is yet more powerful than ambition, therefore does he answer: "Deign first to let the prisoners be drawn up before thee." In compliance with this request

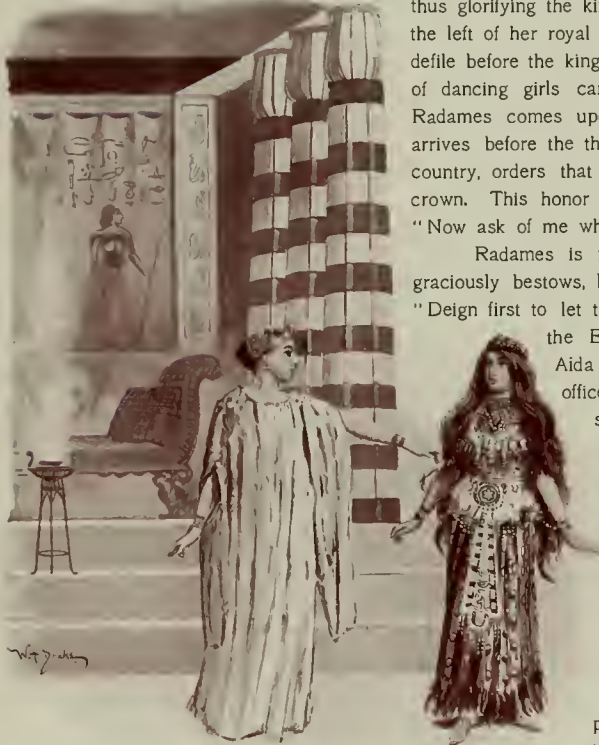
the Ethiopian captives are brought in by the guards, and as they pass in file Aida views them anxiously, until the last to enter is Amonasro, dressed as an officer, whom, however, she quickly recognizes, and cries out: "What do I see? He!—my father!" Amneris is rejoiced that the royal prisoner is thus within her power, reckoning that through punishment of him she may better satisfy her vengeance upon Aida. Amonasro, in an aside, cautions Aida not to betray him, hoping that good fortune may yet aid him to deceive the king as to his royal station. Therefore does Amonasro point to his uniform and declare that in this office livery has he defended his king and country, until at his feet Ethiopia's brave ruler lay, transfixed by many fatal wounds. Amonasro asks no mercy for himself, but he supplicates the conqueror that he show mercy to his other prisoners, "whose only crime is that they love their country." Aida, prisoners, and slaves, join their entreaties for pity, but Ramphis and the priests importune the

king to destroy the savage horde and thus permit the will of the gods to be accomplished.

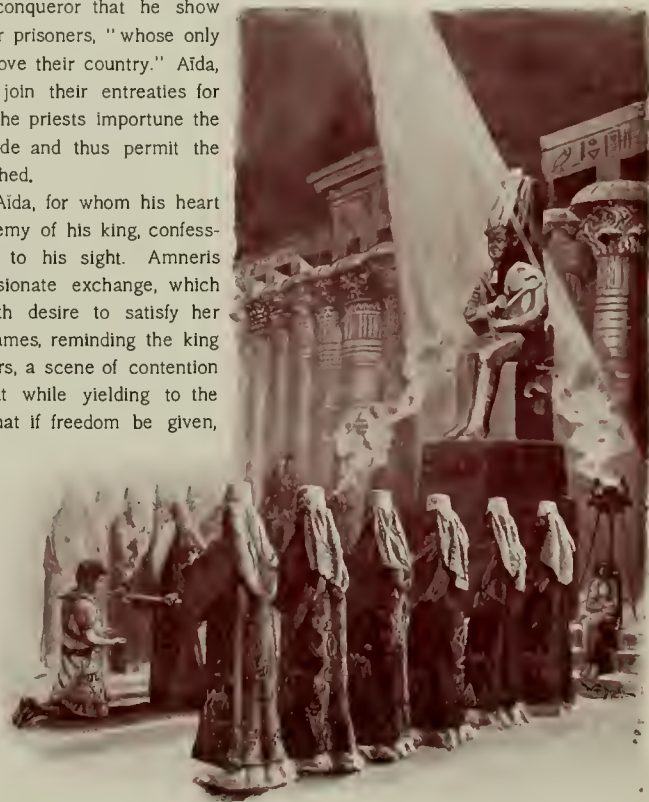
Radames is moved to compassion by the pathetic looks of Aida, for whom his heart yearns with unflinching affection even though she is daughter of the enemy of his king, confessing that the sorrow reflected in her face renders it more beautiful to his sight. Amneris perceives the anxious glance, the sympathetic recognition, the passionate exchange, which feeds the fires of her rankling jealousy, and grows impatient with desire to satisfy her hate. The king, however, is disposed to be merciful, and when Radames, reminding the king of his promise, asks that life and liberty be granted to all the prisoners, a scene of contention ensues. The priests are so importunate, speaking for the gods, that while yielding to the pledges made to Radames as saviour of the country, they demand that if freedom be given, it may not be to Aida and her father, who, they recommend, shall be detained as an earnest of peace and security to the nation, which granting, the king now speaks:

"Of security and peace a better pledge
I will now give: Radames, the country
Owes all to thee. The hand of Amneris
Be thy reward. Over Egypt one day
With her thou shalt reign."

Gleefully, to herself, Amneris utters: "Now let the slave come—let her come to take my love from me—if she dares!"



"Ah, pity! What more remains to me?
My life is a desert!"



"Let the holy sword, tempered by the gods,
In thy hand become a thunderbolt of death!"

The king and priests glorify Egypt and the victors in hymns of praise; the prisoners show their gratitude in pæans of thanksgiving, and Amneris betrays her exultation, but Radames cannot join in their song utterances of joy and triumph, for he reads a warning of evil fate in the promises of the king, esteeming as he does that the throne of Egypt is of little worth compared with the heart of Aida, for whose love he professes willingness to surrender all earthly preferments. The scene closes with an intensely dramatic concert number, in which a quintet of voices is set off against successive choruses of priests, prisoners and people.

Act III is played on the banks of the Nile. Great rocks bestrew the shore, among which grow large palm trees, and between the foliage glimpses are caught of the Temple of Isis. It is night, but moon and stars flood the scene with a rich and mellow light that dashes through the trees, leaving checkered shadows on the slopes and goes dancing on the placid river that shimmers with a beauty peculiarly its own. Within the sacred temple, dedicated to the worship of the greatest of the Egyptian trinity, hymns of adoration are heard, borne out upon the night's still air. Soon a boat skims across the river and gains the shore near the temple, and from it step Amneris, Ramphis and several veiled women. The

high-priest invites Amneris into the temple, where prayers are to be offered for her approaching nuptials, and that Radames may be bound to her in true devotion. All the veiled women enter with Amneris into the temple save one, who proves to be the unhappy Aida. She remains on the outside in most disconsolate mood, resolved to cast herself into the Nile, and thus end forever the tragedy of her unfortunate love, unless she shall meet here Radames, whose coming is expected, and receive encouragement from his lips. While thus waiting she plaintively renders a beautiful solo, "Oh, skies of tender blue." When the song is ended Amonasro appears, who comes to propose a strategy whereby they both may escape from Egypt and carry succor to Ethiopia. Passionately earnest is his speech, and hurriedly he tells her that Radames loves her with a devotedness that makes him a slave to her will; that Amneris is her dangerous rival, who is even now concerting means for her destruction, and to wed Radames, even against his preference. He reminds her of the sufferings endured by his people, through oppressions of the hated Egyptians, and appeals to her patriotic instincts to employ her arts to give freedom to her enslaved countrymen and to

restore him to the throne. Having thus aroused in her an ambition to deliver her country, Amonasro tells her that the

Ethiopians have rebelled, and that she must persuade Radames to betray to her the road over which the Egyptian army will travel in their march against the Ethiopians. She recoils with horror at the suggestion, but Amonasro pleads so earnestly, and pictures the wrongs of her countrymen so graphically that he wins her consent, and then retires behind the palm trees to wait the results of his persuasion. Radames quickly appears, and accosts Aida in the most affectionate manner, but she answers him coldly and evasively, and when he protests his devotion she admonishes him that the rites of another love await him; that even now Amneris is preparing for the nuptials. Radames vows the constancy of his love for her alone, and tells her that when he returns from the expedition, which he is appointed to lead against the Ethiopians, and gains the king's reward, "We shall live blessed by eternal love." Aida is somewhat reassured by his earnestness, but is still fearful of the vindictive fury of Amneris, whose revenge, like a thunderbolt, may fall on him as well as upon her father and herself. When he promises to protect her she declares such power is not his, "But if thou lovest me, a way of escape is open to us." Thereupon the two sing an enticing duet: "Ah! Fly with me, and



"Now ask of me what thou most wishest.
Nothing shall be denied thee on such a day."

leave behind these deserts bare and blighted," etc. Radames is delighted with the proposal, reckoning all power and glory as of small value compared with possession of the woman he loves. She tells him that in the land of her birth the air is perfumed, and the fields are abloom with fragrant flowers that offer a nuptial couch. He is thus made anxious to escape to this favored country, and urges her to hasten while the opportunity is theirs. The two go aside a little way, when suddenly Aida pauses to ask, "But tell me, by what road shall we avoid the armed host?"

Unsuspecting, Radames answers that the path chosen by the Egyptian troops to fall on the enemy will be deserted until to-morrow, when they will march by way of the Pass of Napata. As these words are spoken, Amonasro issues from his concealment and exclaims: "The Pass of Napata! There shall be my people!" Radames is shocked by this intrusion, and demands to know who it is that thus dares to spy upon him. When informed by Aida that it is her father, Radames is beside himself with shame and grief that he should have thus unconsciously betrayed his country. The two try in vain to comfort him, and while so engaged Amneris, Ramphis, priests, and guards rush out of the temple, having overheard the conversation, and all fiercely accuse Radames as a traitor. Much confusion ensues, amid which Aida and Amonasro manage to escape, but Radames is too proud to flee and submissively remains in the custody of the priests.

Act IV.—The closing act of this beautiful opera is one of great power for the profound sympathy and moving pity that it excites. When the curtain rises it discloses a hall in the king's palace, to the left an imposing gateway that opens to the subterranean hall of judgment, and on the right a passage that conducts to the prison in which Radames is confined. First to appear is Amneris, who approaches the gate of the subterranean hall, her heart fairly riven with conflicting emotions. She is bitterly angered by the escape of Aida, her rival, but begins to reflect in sorest contrition of the punishment that may fall upon the luckless head of Radames. She painfully considers the evil influence she has exerted to condemn him, and realizing now the awful peril of his position, charged as he is with treason, she defends him to herself and exclaims, out of the depths of her anguish:

"I love him always—desperate, mad
Is this love that destroys my life.
Oh! if he could love me!
I would save him—and how?
Let me try. Guards! Radames comes!"

Obedient to the orders of Amneris, Radames is brought by his guards into her presence, and stands mute, submitting to whatever fate decrees, and yet a soldier in his bearing. The princess begs him to exculpate himself, promising herself to become a messenger of pardon and of life. Responsive, he disavows all that is charged in his indictment; that before gods and men no traitor is he; that his incautious lips did reveal the fatal secret, but without a thought of treachery to his country. Amneris tries now to impress him with the fear of death, to which he has been condemned by solemn judgment of the priests. Execution of the sentence, she reminds him, is very near at hand, when by the priests' judgment he will be consigned to a death most awful, to a living tomb where his life will slowly fail through terrible sufferings; yet from this fate escape is possible through her intercession, which she persuasively offers, and she thus fervidly protests to him:

"For thee I have undergone
The dreadful anguish of death.
I loved thee—I suffered so much—
I watched through the night in tears.
Country and throne and life—
All I would give for thee."

For Radames the light of his life has grown dim since Aida has departed, therefore with fierceness he turns upon the jealous author of his misery, and spurning her proposal accuses her of having completed his misery by bringing him



"A horrible ghost among the shadows approaches—
The fleshless arms over thy head it raised—it is thy mother—She curses thee."

to the bar of condemnation, and of having taken Aida away, probably to murder her! Amneris recoils at his reproaches, but composes herself to assure Radames that Aida lives, though whither she has fled, save with her father, no report has been made by priest or messenger. Radames is overjoyed to learn that Aida is safe, and utters a prayer that she may reach her native land and never learn of his unhappy fate. Amneris, still persuading, promises to save him if he will swear to see Aida no more, which he refuses. Once and again she offers to grant him life, a pardon, a throne! if he will renounce her, to all of which promises Radames returns the answer that

"Death is a supreme blessing.
If for her it is given me to die;
In undergoing the last extremity
My heart will feel great joy.
Human anger I fear no more,
I fear only thy pity."

The interview closes, and Radames retires surrounded by guards, as Amneris falls disconsolate on a seat and pours out the passion of her grief at having, through insane jealousy, caused his apprehension upon an accusation that will lead to his death. She turns her face towards the subterranean hall and sees, through eyes suffused with tears, a procession of priests moving towards the judgment chamber, from which they will summon Radames to plead to the fatal charge of treason. Soon their voices are heard calling the gods to aid in their deliberations and to assist their judgment that justice may be done. Amneris, heart-broken of remorse, prays for pity, and declaring him innocent beseeches the gods to save him. A moment later Radames crosses the stage and descends to the subterranean hall, where he is brought before his judges and solemnly exhorted to defend himself. As one dumb before his accusers, Radames refuses to answer a word, and his guilt being pronounced, he is condemned to an infamous death,—to burial alive in the vault that is under the altar of the god Pthah. Amneris grows infuriate at the judgment, and when the priests issue from the hall she pours out upon them the vials of her wrath in furious maledictions, declaring that while calling themselves ministers of heaven, they are in truth murderers of innocence; but they refuse to heed her, and withdraw slowly, as she voices her despair. In the next, and last scene, the

stage is divided into two parts, the upper showing the brilliantly illuminated Temple of Vulcan and the lower the dark subterranean vault beneath the altar.

By the uncertain light is dimly distinguishable a long succession of arches, and a colossal statue of Osiris supports the pilasters of the vault. The priests are seen, indistinctly, placing a heavy stone over the opening to the stairway that leads down, and Radames, submissive to his fate, is observed seated on a step of the staircase, where he soliloquizes:

"The fatal stone is closed above me,
Behold my tomb. The light of day
I shall see no more.
I shall see no more, Aida," etc.

While expressing the hope that she may never learn how he died he is startled by a moan issuing from the darkness beyond, which he thinks must be a ghostly tenant of the fatal chamber. A moment later his amazement increases as a form approaches which as it draws near he discovers to be Aida, who thus speaks: "My heart prophetic of thy sentence, into this tomb which opened itself for thee I furtive made my way," etc.



^a Radames, thou didst reveal the country's secrets to the foreigner."

The scene becomes powerfully affecting, revealing as it does the sacrificing spirit of overmastering love, during which Radames reproaches himself for having brought her to death through much loving.

"To die! So pure and beautiful!
To die for love of me;
In the flower of thy youth
To fly from life!
Heaven created thee for love!
No, thou shalt not die;
Too much I loved thee—
Too beautiful thou art!"

She answering his great grief with consolements of heavenly recompense, tenderly tells him that love has lured her to this place of doom that she may enjoy the bliss of expiring in his arms. But her voice grows weaker, the shadows of death creep over her fast-failing life, and with clouded consciousness, through awful sufferings, she raves of angelic visions:

"Seest thou the angel of death
Radiant to us approaches?
He takes us to eternal joys
Upborne by his golden pinions.
Above us heaven has already opened;
There every grief ceases;
There begins the ecstasy
Of an immortal love."

During this touching interview between the expiring lovers the priestesses execute their mystic dances in the temple above, and sing their weird hymn of death. Aïda becomes fainter, and stifles, which arms the energies of Radames to make a desperate effort to raise the fatal stone, but being unable to do so, he returns to Aïda and clasping her in his arms he bids farewell to earth and welcomes the light that ushers in eternal day.

Amneris in mourning robes appears in the temple, where prostrating herself on the stone that seals the vault of death, she invokes Isis to pity her distress, to forgive her fatal jealousy, and to open heaven to receive Radames.



"O earth, farewell! Farewell, vale of tears—
Dream of joy which vanished in grief!"



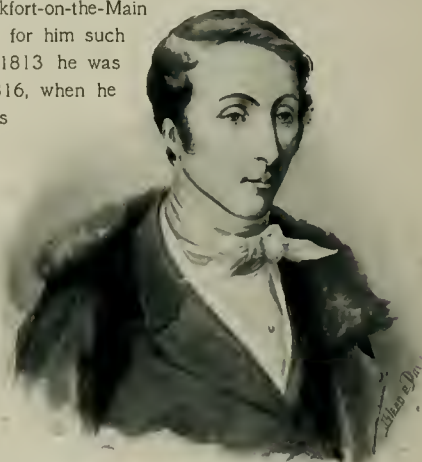
A SKETCH OF WEBER.



CARL MARIA VON WEBER, born at Eutin, in the duchy of Oldenburg, December 18, 1786, died in London, June 5, 1826, is the most noteworthy example of musical heredity that history affords; perhaps because genius and talent are rarely transmitted. He has the further distinction of being the grandest figure in German opera before Wagner, and to his efforts, in conjunction with those of Spohr, is to be credited the establishment of a dignified school of opera, while he occupies a foremost place as master of musical romanticism in his country. He was a natural product of the operatic stage, which he elevated by his amazing melodic inventions and astonishing freshness of style, and became an idol of all the young German composers of his time, as well as of those who have come after. Mendelssohn, Schumann, Marschner, Berlioz, Lindpainter, and Wagner, paid his memory a slavish admiration, and set his fame upon a pinnacle where it will remain conspicuous for centuries.

Weber's father was a violin virtuoso, his mother a famous singer, and his brothers were excellent musicians, two of whom were distinguished pupils of Haydn. At an early age Carl gave evidence of great musical talent, and he was placed under the instruction of his brother, Fritz; his progress being rapid, he studied successively under the direction of Heuschkel, Michael Haydn, and Kalcher. It was while with the latter, in 1798, that Weber wrote his first opera, "The Power of Love and Wine," which, however, was so poorly received that for a while he turned his attention to the trade of lithography, which he prosecuted, by his father's financial help, until he failed in business.

In 1800 he went to Freiberg, giving concerts on the way, where he obtained a libretto from an opera company then playing in the city, for which he composed the music, and in a few months had it produced in Freiberg with some success. This second effort at operatic composition was called "The Country Maid," and it continued to be sung for several years, being especially well received in Vienna. His third opera, which had its initial representation in Augsburg in 1803, was called "Peter Schmoll and His Neighbors," which proved as unfortunate on the stage as it was gracelessly christened, a result which was not without benefit, for it induced Weber to renew his studies with Abt Vogler, who persuaded him to enter upon more serious work. In 1804 he obtained the position of Chapel Master at the Breslau Theatre, which he resigned two years later to become music director at Karlsruhe. This place he retained only a few months, when he was tendered the place of Secretary to Prince Ludwig and music teacher to his daughters. It was while holding this responsible position that Weber composed "Sylvana," which though rehearsed was not publicly sung because of an offence committed by his father which so angered the dissolute Ludwig that father and son had to hastily leave Wurtemberg. Subsequently "Sylvana" was given with considerable success in Frankfort-on-the-Main and in Berlin. In 1811 "Abu Hassan" was put on the stage at Munich, and gained for him such a wide popularity that his ascendancy may be said to date from its production. In 1813 he was made Chapel Master of the largest theatre in Prague, which position he held until 1816, when he was called to Dresden by the king to conduct the new German opera, then in its infancy, but which through his energy and able direction developed into strong maturity. Though well established as a director, and even as a promising composer, it was not until 1821 that Weber gained the fame for which his soul thirsted, by the production of his masterpiece, "Der Freischutz," which gave him a reputation that years have not diminished. His next important opera was "Euryanthe," which failed in Vienna in 1823, but achieved a considerable success in Berlin two years later. In 1825 he began work on "Oberon," for Charles Kemble, director of Covent Garden, London, but was several times interrupted by ill health; he finally completed the score in 1826, and went to London to superintend its performance (April 12). It was while thus engaged that Weber succumbed to the most insidious and persistent of diseases, consumption, from which he had long been a sufferer, though his physical appearance did not seem to indicate a fatal termination so soon. His remains were given burial in Moorfield Chapel, June 21, where they reposed until 1844, when some of his relatives caused the body to be removed to Dresden and laid in the family vault, and a modest tablet was set up to mark his last resting place.



CARL MARIA VON WEBER.





Photograph taken by J. M. Dodge

RETTWICH - DODGE.

Der Freischütz

(AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING BY WILLIAM DE LEFTWICH DODGE)

MAX—"Zamiel, hear me ! Seven !"

(echo, seven ! seven !)

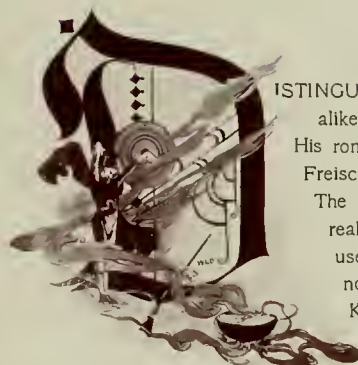
ZAMIEL—"I am here !"

LAST SCENE OF ACT II.

DER FREISCHUTZ.

(THE SHARPSHOOTER.)

WORDS BY KIND.—MUSIC BY WEBER.



DISTINGUISHED for originality, Weber is hardly less famous for versatility, his genius being displayed alike in overtures, cantatas, church and chamber music, concertos, songs, symphonies and sonatas. His romanticism is noticeable in nearly all his musical works, but is especially pronounced in "Der Freischutz," which retains its place in the modern repertory with a popularity that few operas exceed. The story is one of surpassing interest, which Weber has invested with such amazing wealth of realism that he deserves to be ranked with Wagner as a descriptive composer, while his effective use of the *leit motif*, of which he has been called the inventor, renders some of his compositions, notably "Der Freischutz," marvels of potential expression in instrumentation. The tale which Kind used as a basis for the libretto is an old one, associated with other Teutonic legends of the Black Forest, which represent the magical expedients employed by the Demon of Evil to win human souls. "Der Freischutz" had its first representation in Dresden in 1819, where it scored a moderate success, but the music afterwards underwent many changes at Weber's

hand, and with such improvement that its next production, in Berlin, June 18, 1821, was attended by the most enthusiastic demonstrations, and it immediately took its place with the greatest operas that had been rendered on the German stage. Three years later, July 24, 1824, it was given for the first time in English, in London, where the success of the opera was so great that it was being performed in as many as nine different theatres at one time. In December of the same year, "Der Freischutz" made its initial appearance in Paris, but under the title "Robin des Bois," having been adapted for the French by Hector Berlioz, who took such liberties with the original score as to introduce divertissements of dance-music from other of Weber's compositions, and a new libretto was also provided by Blaze and Sauvage. In its re-fashioned character the opera failed to satisfy the Parisians, wherefore, after a few representations it was withdrawn, and was not placed upon the boards of Paris again until 1841. This time Kind's text was followed by Pacini's accurate translation, but the recitations were by Berlioz, who insisted on re-naming the opera "Le Franc Archer." "Der Freischutz" was first sung in Italian at Covent Garden, London, in 1850, since which time it has become a marked favorite in nearly all the languages and countries of Europe.

The story upon which "Der Freischutz" is founded may be thus briefly rehearsed: The Green Huntsman of the Black Forest is usually represented as a diabolical incarnate, and so in the opera this hellish personage appears, bearing the suggestive name of "Zamiel." The action of the play is laid in Bohemia, about the close of the Thirty Years' War, when the military spirit was dominant, and legends of mysterious personages were most common. One of the characters of the drama is an aged man named Kuno, who holds the hereditary post of Master-of-the-Chase to Prince Ottokar, ruler of Bohemia. The master, however, is



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"Was I blind or do the sinews of my arm fail me?"

more important than the position, chiefly because he is father of a beautiful girl called Agathe, who has a suitable lover in one Max, a hunter, but to whose hand Killian, a peasant, also aspires. Caspar, a drunken game-keeper, of whom no good has ever been said, having sold himself to Satan for a temporary power, is the varlet of the play, who designs that Max shall forfeit his soul to the Prince of Evil, thereby fulfilling his compact to supply a victim every seventh year.

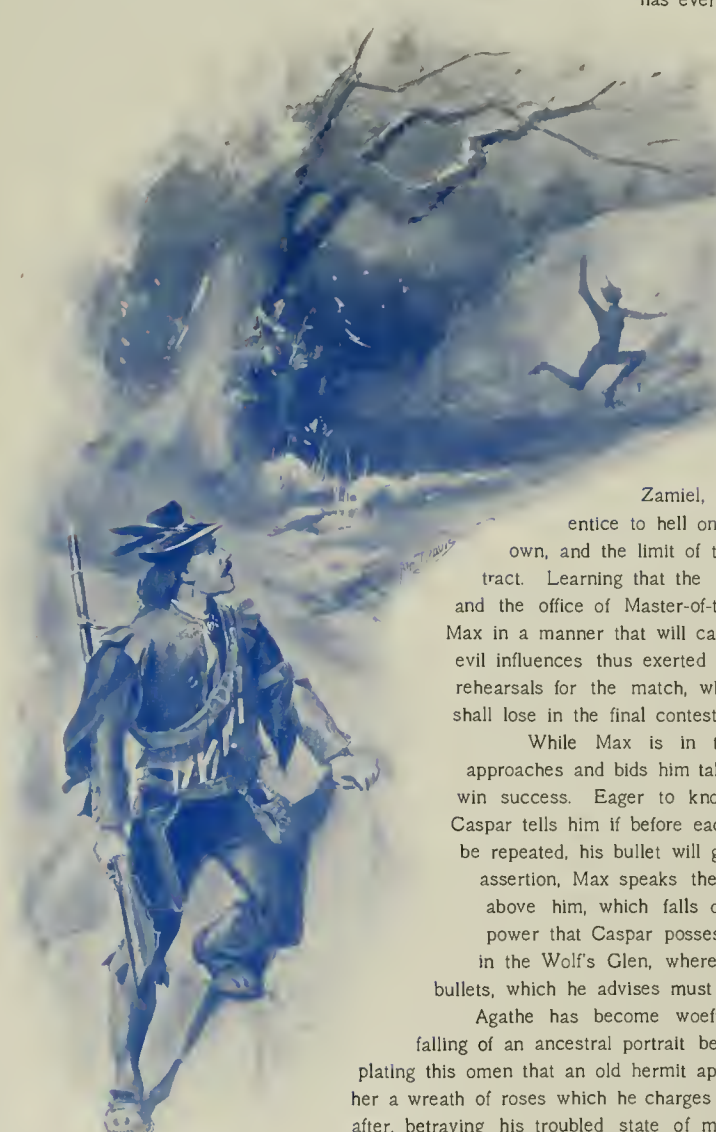
Kuno has grown too old to continue much longer in the Prince's service, and having no son, he desires that the honors of his office may fall to Max, whom he has selected, with Agathe's approval, to become his son-in-law. This arrangement is agreeable to Prince Otto-kar, upon condition, however, that Max shall prove himself worthy of the place, and the proof of fitness must be established by superiority of marksmanship at the forthcoming shooting match, at which many hunters have been invited to contest. Caspar is able to perform many wonderful things through the help of

Zamiel, the evil one, for which power he has bargained to entice to hell one soul every seventh year, under pain of forfeiting his own, and the limit of time has almost expired without fulfillment of his contract. Learning that the prize for marksmanship may be the hand of Agathe, and the office of Master-of-the-Chase, Caspar conceives the purpose of tempting Max in a manner that will cause him to surrender his soul to Zamiel. Under the evil influences thus exerted by Caspar, Max misses the mark many times during rehearsals for the match, which plunges him into the greatest dejection, lest he shall lose in the final contest.

While Max is in the deepest melancholy over his ill fortune Caspar approaches and bids him take courage, as a way may be found by which he may win success. Eager to know such secret he begs to be informed, upon which Caspar tells him if before each shot the magic formula, "In the name of Zamiel," be repeated, his bullet will go straight to the mark. To test the truth of Caspar's assertion, Max speaks the mystic words, and then fires at an eagle soaring high above him, which falls dead at his feet. Max cannot doubt the mysterious power that Caspar possesses, and is readily persuaded to meet him at midnight in the Wolf's Glen, where by Zamiel's aid he is promised a supply of magic bullets, which he advises must be used with an exhortation of the devil's help.

Agathe has become woefully oppressed by premonitions of coming evil, the falling of an ancestral portrait being first to disturb her thoughts. It is while contemplating this omen that an old hermit appears to warn her of a danger near at hand, and gives her a wreath of roses which he charges her to wear upon her wedding day. Max enters soon after, betraying his troubled state of mind as if to confirm her anxieties, telling of strange sounds and horrid dreams that must have some fearful portent. Notwithstanding these many auguries of ill, Max is so eager to win the prize that in disregard of all warnings he starts

upon his way to meet Caspar in Wolf's Glen. Entering the wood he is startled by visions of uncouth things; gruesome apparitions seem to dispute his advance; nameless creatures fly about his head; skeletons cackle and deride, and dreadful noises fill the air, but he braves all these forms of infernality, and at the midnight hour meets Zamiel and Caspar. By the arts of the demon seven bullets are cast, three of which are given to Max and three to Caspar. The seventh Zamiel reserves to be directed by his will, but Caspar contrives to give it to Max, who does not suspect its properties for harm. the use of which was intended to cause the forfeiture of his soul to Satan.



"What dark'ning power is ruling o'er me?"

In the opening of the third act, Agathe is seen preparing for her nuptials with Max. While dressing she relates to Annchen, a relative, a singular dream, wherein she fancied herself a dove, and that Max had fired at her with fatal precision, but as she fell she came to herself again and found a fierce bird gasping out its life at her feet. While ruefully reflecting upon the import of this augury, Agathe's fears are intensified by discovery that instead of a bridal chaplet there has been sent to her a funeral wreath. Her melancholy is mitigated, however, by reminder of the rose-garland which the old hermit gave her, with an injunction to wear it on her wedding day as a protection against harm.

The next scene shows the shooting tournament before the Prince and a large gathering of his courtiers. Max's proficiency with the rifle is attested by three excellent shots which win him great applause; but having a single bullet left,—the one to be directed by Zamiel's will,—he is in despair, fearful that if called to give further proofs of his marksmanship he may fail. The Prince, however, consents to be satisfied with another shot, which he invites Max to expend upon a dove hovering about a tree near by. As he lifts his rifle Agathe, approaching, shouts to him: "Do not fire! I am the dove!" But her caution comes too late; the rifle is discharged, and Agathe falls fainting into the arms of her bridesmaids. But it is fright alone that causes unconsciousness, for the magic wreath of roses has protected her against harm. Defeated in his purpose, Zamiel directs the speeding bullet to the heart of Caspar, whose soul is claimed by the evil one. Max confesses his folly and the Prince pronounces an order of banishment, but the aged hermit interposes and secures a mitigation of the sentence to one year of probation, at the end of which ordeal-year, if his conduct remain irreproachable, he may receive Agathe in marriage.

The overture of "Der Freischutz" is a rare masterpiece of brilliant instrumentation, in which the introduction of an adagio horn produces a marked effect of musical coloring, followed by orchestral motives that wondrously express the mystic scenes and thrilling episodes of the drama. The opera opens with a scene representing a green in front of a forest inn, where Max is seated at a table with a mug of beer before him, while at the back is a target surrounded by a company of people, who sing of victory, and the fame that shall be his who proves most expert in the approaching shooting tournament. Max rises excitedly at the words of the song, and placing his rifle against a tree asks that his sight is defective or his nerves unsteady, and to praise himself for having won the

In Scene II, Kuno, Caspar and several hunters discuss the results of the contest, the former expressing regret that so much sport should be made of Max merely because he had been unfortunate, whereat Killian assures him that it is all in good part, it being a custom to exclude from the feast given in honor of the best marksmen all who in the contest miss the target. "Why," asks Kuno, "who has failed to hit the mark?"

Max, with a sense of shame and despair, confesses he is that most unfortunate one! As he stands with eyes upon the ground, a picture of woeful dejection, Caspar, first giving thanks to Zamiel for the opportunity, approaches Max and in an undertone tells him his bad shooting was caused by an evil charm which, however, he may break by observing instructions: "Repair at dead of night to some lonely spot where four roads meet; there dip a sword or ramrod in blood and draw a mystic circle within which you must stand and call three times for aid from the Great Hunter."

Killian exclaims, with show of fright, "God's mercy! Surely this is one of Satan's imps!" Kuno, less alarmed, and most anxious that Max shall win his daughter, accuses Caspar of being a worthless drunkard and a foul cheat at play, and bids



"Why, the nail—how can you ask?
It surely should uphold your master."

him begone, but he cautions Max to have a care, for if at the morrow's tournament he does not prove the most skillful marksman he must abandon hope of winning Agathe. "To-morrow we shall expect you to do better at the Prince's Camp," is Kuno's warning.



"The moon displays her silvery light;—
Oh, lovely night!"

that the bullet fired by Kuno was directed by an evil art, therefore he had not by good right won the prize."

"A magic bullet!" utters Killian; "why, I have long heard it told that these the devil often uses; and my grandmother used to say that six of such always hit the mark, but that the seventh flies wherever the evil one wills it!"

"Whatever be the facts," continues Kuno, "it was upon such reasoning that the Prince ordained the law, never since infracted, that Kuno's descendants shall contest in marksmanship whenever the post of Ranger is to be conferred. and it is also the custom, then established, that he who gains the prize shall be wed on the same day. But the time is speeding, and we must away. Max, have a care for the morrow, when your fate must be decided."

Max is deeply dejected, which no words of courage can relieve, and fear possesses him when the peasants sing:

"Hark the merry bugles sounding,
Their peals reflecting from the rocky side;
To-morrow, ere the day be closing,
We will welcome groom and bride."

Scene III.—Killian praises Kuno as a worthy ranger; then turning to Max offers his hand in friendship, and asks him to retire to the inn as the night is falling, and the dance is ready to begin. Max is consumed by a melancholy over the prospects, which appear to him, of losing the hand of Agathe through his failure at the approaching tournament. and

The peasants now crowd about Kuno and ask him to relate the story of how these shooting contests came to be a custom of the country, whereupon, obliging, he tells this legend: "It was many years ago, but not beyond my ancestral line, as I may trace, that Kuno, father of my lineage, whose picture hangs in the Ranger's house, was one of the Prince's body-guard. This ancient Kuno was a valiant man and most expert with all his weapons, but as a rifle shot he had no peers. One morning, as the Prince and Kuno were riding through the forest, a lusty stag sprang swiftly from a covert before them, bearing upon his back a naked man, bound fast thereon by many cords, as was the custom in former times to punish thieves. So strange a sight, and one withal so tragic, begat the Prince's sympathy, who in quick words promised to reward with perpetual post of Ranger, and the manor-right to Forest Lodge, any one who should kill the stag and rescue the captive. Moved by pity more than by hope of profit, Kuno fired, at which the fleeing stag fell dead and the culprit was delivered without hurt.

But the reward was not so quickly bestowed; for Satan was as active in those days as he is in these. Kuno had many enemies, some of whom, powerful of influence, persuaded the Prince

therefore sullenly replies that he has no heart for merry-making, and being left alone to his brooding, in the following scene he recites his woes and hopeless state of mind in a touching solo :

"Through the forests and the meadows
Joy with me was wont to stray,
For my rifle never failing,
Made each bird and beast my prey.
But, alas, by heaven forsaken,
Deprived the power of chance to know,
Hope now sleeping, will not waken,
And my doom is endless woe."

While Max is thus giving voice to his heart sorrows, Caspar appears, and accosting him as comrade, expresses pleasure at the meeting. Max returns a sullen answer, which Caspar considers poor requital for the help he offers ; but observing a jug of beer on a table, he conceives the purpose of cheering Max by ordering wine. When it is brought Caspar contrives to drop a drug into the cup from which Max is to drink, and then presents it to his victim, at the same time calling upon Zamiel to aid his designs. Max refuses to touch the cup, however, even when he is asked to drink to his worthy patron, Ranger Kuno, whereupon Caspar, in a spirit of persuasion, renders a jolly aria, praising the power of wine, "that makes a mortal feel divine."

Caspar tries to induce Max to join in the song ; but all his enticements are unavailing, until he is asked to drink to the health and long life of Agathe, which as a loyal lover he may not refuse. After Max drains his cup, Caspar resumes his song and exerts his blandishments to arouse the gloomy swain from his melancholy ; but Max remains indifferent to both wine and song, and as the clock strikes seven he is admonished thereby that it is time he should be returning home.

The supreme moment for applying his magic arts has arrived, and Caspar gains his victim's attention by making him a proffer of help ; a help so potent that he may become the victor on the morrow, and thus insure his happiness. Max is all eagerness to know how he may be assisted, but doubts the ability of any mortal to render aid to one in such distress as he. Caspar reassures him, and, to prove his words, invites Max to take his gun and fire at an eagle that is soaring far overhead. Max declares it impossible to bring down a bird at such a distance, but Caspar bids him "fire in the name of Zamiel," which he obeys, and to his astonishment the eagle drops as from the clouds at his feet. Max is alarmed at the result, apprehending that some infernal art has been employed ; but suddenly comprehending the help of such an agency if it may be obtained, eagerly asks Caspar if he has other bullets like the one that killed the eagle.

Caspar, with look of insinuation, replies that he has no more at present, but that this one seemed all-sufficient ! This answer encourages Max to inquire where such bullets may be obtained, to which Caspar responds : "If you would know, this very night you may realize your wish. Meet me in the Wolf's Glen at the midnight hour, and thy dearest hopes may be fulfilled."

Max trembles at the suggestion, and hesitates to dare so desperate an enterprise as entering a spot which has often been declared to be the doorway of hell. Caspar charges him with cowardice, but appeals more persuasively by reminding that Agathe is deeply in love, and has her heart set upon wedding with him, which, however, cannot be unless he prove victor in the tourney of to-morrow. Zamiel's aid is also invoked, by which seductions Max promises to be at the appointed place, however fearsome it may be.



"I shot a stag at twilight, in the forest near Wolf's Glen."

As Max disappears Caspar gleefully sings of his prospective triumph in winning another soul for hell, thereby preserving his own from forfeiture for at least another seven years:

"Haste we now to improve the hour,
A victim soon will confess my power."

Act II.—The opening scene of the second act represents an ante-room. Annchen, a relative, is seen upon a step-ladder with hammer and nail hanging a portrait of the first Kuno, while Agathe sits in a chair removing a bandage from her head and contemplating, with many misgivings, her wedding on the morrow. Annchen strikes the nail and makes some light remarks about the old owl—referring to the picture—that has fallen from his perch, who had better be where he belongs. Agathe begs that more respect be paid her grandsire; to which Annchen answers that she meant the nail which had so treacherously let the master fall. Agathe bewails that, amid all the mirth and gladness which others show at her approaching nuptials, she cannot avoid a feeling of sadness, which Annchen tries in vain to dispel by a song:

"Be ever light and gay,
Since life is one brief day"

Agathe is much disturbed by premonitions which she construes as foreshadowing some calamity, and in her alarmed state of mind remarks the lonesomeness of the place. "Yes," responds her friend, "the sensation is not a pleasant one, considering that on your wedding eve we are alone in a haunted castle, and the old pictures are jumping off the walls." But perceiving that sympathy is a poor antidote for fear, she resumes a blithesome air and joyously sings:

"Perchance a youth a maid should meet,
Need she run away with fright?
If his looks her love should greet,
Sure, the maid should not take flight," etc.

Agathe is somewhat reassured by the gay demeanor of her friend and joins in the last verse, as she busies herself with arrangement of her dress; but there still remains a sense of melancholy, due, she explains, to a visit which she received this day from a hermit, who forewarning her of danger, presented a wreath of roses which he promised will give protection against harm, a prediction already verified, for the picture in falling had struck and might have killed her; therefore does she value the gift exceedingly, and will cherish the roses accordingly. Observing Agathe so concerned, Annchen asks if she may not place the wreath on the window sill, where it will be exposed to the fresh evening air, and as the night is far advanced she begs Agathe to retire; but the maid refuses until Max has arrived; whereat Annchen complains of the trouble that young lovers occasion, and makes her exit, bearing away the roses.

Now left alone (Scene II) Agathe indulges sad reflections, fearing, yet hoping, to which strange feelings she gives utterance in a beautiful solo, "Softly sighs the voice of evening," one of the most charming numbers of the opera.

As the song concludes, in Scene III Max enters excitedly, followed by Annchen. He is joyfully received by Agathe, whom embracing he begs forgiveness for keeping her waiting so long, and regrets that he can remain only a few moments. Agathe is surprised by his haste, and reminds him that the hour is late and the weather lowering; but he persists that he cannot tarry. She, alarmed by his agitation, asks if he has again missed the mark. "On the contrary," he replies, "the largest bird has just fallen a prey to the accuracy of my aim. But what is this I see? Blood upon your forehead, and your hair is clotted with the red stream. Oh, tell me, I implore what has happened!"



"Zamiel, Zamiel, appear!
By the enchanter's skull, oh, hear!"

Agathe quiets his fears by telling him it is a simple wound made by a falling picture; that it will be fully healed before the bridal procession begins. "Ah, Max," she exhorts, "be not reserved, for I love you so dearly that if to-morrow you should be unsuccessful in the tourney, and we thereby be parted, my heart will surely break. Tell me, I pray you, what circumstance hastens your departure?" Max dissembles, by answering that he has shot a stag and must hurry to carry it away lest some peasants may rob him of his quarry, which lies near Wolf's Glen!

Agathe is horrified by this expression of his purpose to enter the devil's haunt, beset with terrors and hedged about with ills that threaten the souls of those who venture near. In impassioned speech she beseeches him to renounce his resolution to dare so dangerous a place, and begs him not to leave her; but the spell, and the ambition that prompts him to brave all perils, the hope thereby to win so dear a bride, makes him impervious to her entreaties, and asking her forgiveness and blessings he hurries away.

In the following occurs the incantation scene, as weird and terrible as that of the rout of the witches in "Faust," to which the eerie music of Weber adds wondrously, giving hellish sounds to impish revels, and producing a realism of diablerie that never fails to create a sensation of shiver and dread among the audience. A wild, rugged, darksome, crime-suggesting glen is shown, in which Caspar is observed making a circle of stones, in the centre of which he lays a human skull, an eagle's pinion, a melting pot, and a mould for running bullets. While he is thus engaged invisible spirits chant in sepulchral tones:

"Before to-morrow's sun is run
Deeds of darkness must be done,
Uhui! Uhui! Uhui!"

As the mystic spell is working, Caspar draws his sword and thrusting it ruthlessly through the skull, raises the grisly fetiche high above his head and thus exorcises:

"By this skull, Infernal One, doth hear?
I command thee, Zamiel, appear!"

In prompt response to the summons, the demon issues forth from the cleft of a rock and asks what is required of him? Caspar confesses that to-morrow is the limit of his time, when by engagement he must surrender his soul unless another seven years of grace be obtained by gaining a substitute. He implores the demon to prolong his life, but this request being refused he promises to bring a victim, one who is without guilt, but who will sell his soul for a precious gift, that he may thereby win a bride. The help he seeks, Caspar explains, are those fatal rifle balls that find their prey through direction of the hellish art

"Aye, aye," replies Zamiel, "seven balls he wishes, six of which obey the shooter, but the seventh is mine to guide whither I wish."

"Yes, yes," gleefully answers Caspar, "it is you the seventh to direct, and it is my will that this one may carry death to his bride, whereby my vengeance may be reaped. Thus will I a victim bring when another seven years are run." Zamiel consents, but warningly admonishes: "Let it be so!



"Agathe! Oh! She plunges into the stream!
I then must down—down!"

By the gates of hell to-morrow it shall be he or thou!" So declaring, the demon vanishes amid a puff of smoke and noise of thunder. Caspar wipes his forehead, the skull and sword disappear, and in the centre of the rock-built circle there is seen a fire of fagots under a hanging crucible. A hand is thrust up through the earth holding a flask, which Caspar seizes and drinks from, with thanks to Zamiel for the refreshment. Presently, at the witching hour, Max is seen lurking by a withered tree overlooking the glen, and he gives expression to his fears in a wild recitative. He is appalled by the darkness of the glen, the thunder clouds above, by blood stains on the moon's pale face, by hooting owls, and by shrouded forms that loom and leer in grisly mazes before his sight. But hope and fate lure him forward, and as he descends a few steps Caspar discovers and welcomes him, and invites to hasten, shaking the eagle's wing as an incitement. Max hesitates, at which Caspar calls him coward, which he would resent, but at the same moment he recognizes the spirit of his mother, wrapped in her grave cerements, who, with uplifted hands, beckons him to shun the place. As this spectre vanishes another appears, a vision of Agathe, with a wreath upon her head, who appears to be in the act of leaping into the gulf. With a cry of horror Max springs down the rock to save his promised bride, but the vision vanishes, and he now finds himself at the mystic place of appointment. Caspar orders Max to stand firm, nor be affrighted by any sound, or whatever form he may see, but in case of danger he must repeat such formula as he is directed. So instructing, Caspar prepares for casting the bullets, by placing in the crucible a piece of glass stolen from a church window, a bit of mercury, the eye of a lapwing, and one from a lynx, with three balls added that have hit the mark. Having deposited the ingredients, Caspar bows three times, and repeats:

"Huntsman of this haunted glen,
Zamiel, Zamiel, from thy den,
Give thou me aid to work the spell
Until the charm is finished well."

The casting now begins, and as the bullets drop one by one from the moulds, apparitions are seen pursuing a stag, and an invisible chorus sings, "Through glen and mire, we spirits pursue our flight." Caspar himself becomes terrified at this spectral chase, and when the sixth bullet is moulded the sky grows dreadfully dark, lighted only by darting meteors and flames issuing from the earth, while a torrent of water breaking down the slope tears great rocks from their fastnesses. In violent agitation Caspar cries to Zamiel, and throwing himself upon the ground, as the last bullet is made he implores, in broken accents, assistance of the red fiend by thus reciting:

"Zamiel, hear me and defend;
Seven are cast, thy help now lend!"

At the bidding of his slave, Zamiel appears, with thunder and lightning accompaniment, before whose infernal gaze Caspar crouches closer to the earth, and Max is thrown into a convulsion of fright, which fearsome scene furnishes an exciting climax to the second act.

Act III.—When the curtain rises again, Max and Caspar are seen together in the forest. Fear no longer agitates the ambitious youth, who being most anxious to gain the victory, asks Caspar if he will not share with him more of the magic balls.

"A greedy fellow, indeed," answers Caspar; "I gave you the lion's share, and now you would take the lamb's also!" Max protests that he has only one bullet left, and that two having been fired by Caspar he begs that the remaining one be given him, which Caspar affects to grudgingly spare, this last being the magic seventh (or devil's) which must serve Max at the tourney now near at hand.



AGATHE AT PRAYER, ARRAYED IN HER BRIDAL ROPES.

Scene II shows Agathe dressed in her bridal robes, first in prayer and then by a table in her chamber, singing: "Though drifting clouds by tempest driven."

Scene III immediately follows, with the entrance of Annchen, who is pleased to see her friend prepared for the wedding, but quickly discovers that Agathe has been weeping, and begs to know the cause. Agathe thereupon tells her she is distressed by a strange dream; one which represented her as having been changed into a dove, and while flying from tree to tree was wounded by Max, but when fallen the dove vanished and she was herself again, but beside her was a large bird of prey fluttering in the agonies of death. At the relation of Agathe's dream, Annchen claps her hands for joy, accepting it as a portent of excellent fortune, to which she gives a happy interpretation, for dreams are always to be construed as indicating the contrary; but this fails to reassure Agathe.

Perceiving that something must be done to relieve the mind of Agathe from its settled melancholy, lest the bride of joy become the widow of sorrow, Annchen romances in an irresistibly whimsical aria: "Once, while my poor aunt was dreaming, the door flew open as she slept," etc.

Annchen's levity fails of its purpose to cheer Agathe from her rueful forebodings, and she therefore grows sympathetic and sentimental, in a charming recitative and air: "The stars of love are beaming," etc.

After singing this tender lay, Annchen turns to bring the bridal wreath, which she has left below, and thereupon follows Scene IV, which opens with a song and chorus by four bridesmaids who in turn offer their congratulations and blessings. Annchen returns in time to join the chorus, bearing in her hands a small box, but when the song is finished she startles Agathe by telling her the elder Kuno, whose picture it was that jumped so dangerously from the wall, has been repeating his tricks. Agathe believes some dreadful thing is portended by all these many happenings, but Annchen dismisses them as idle superstitions, and commands that the song be repeated: "Love with cheer and brightest flowers."

As the chorus is singing, Annchen graciously, on bended knee, presents the box to Agathe, who opening it, almost faints as she beholds, instead of a bridal chaplet, a funeral wreath! Annchen is herself frightened by the sight, but with an effort to disguise her perturbation, she accuses the old lady with having changed the packages, and feverishly she covers the box again, declaring it is a shameful mistake, but that a wreath she must have, and one too that is worthy a bride. Thereupon she gathers the flowers from a vase near by and hastily makes a garland of them, with which she adorns the head of the impassive Agatha, after which Annchen and the bridesmaids retire repeating the chorus.

Scene VI shows the tent of Ottokar, Prince of Bohemia, within which lords and courtiers are feasting, while behind are Kuno, Agathe, Max, Caspar and a group of country people. The shooting tournament is about to begin, and as a prelude to this chief event a chorus of hunters render a stirring song, "What equals on earth," etc.

Prince Ottokar approves the spirit of the hunters, whom he invites to finish the feast before proceeding to more serious business. To Kuno he expresses satisfaction with his choice of Max for his son-in-law and successor, but is doubtful of his expertness to honor the post of Ranger, which Kuno confesses, though he declares that once

Max held rank with the best marksmen. Three shots have been well aimed by Max, but Prince Ottokar demands another, and thereupon looking about

discovers a dove resting upon a neighboring tree which he tells Max to fire at, and that upon the success of this last shot depends the prize. Only one bullet now remains, the magic seventh, bewitched by Zamiel, which Max must fire, but at the moment he aims his rifle, Agathe and her bridesmaids appear, and the former cries to him, "Do not fire! I am the dove!"

Almost at the same instant the old hermit, who gave the rose-wreath to Agathe, is seen on a hill near by, who by gestures frightens the dove, which flies but settles quickly in a tree under which Caspar is hiding. Max, undeterred by Agathe's warning, pursues the dove and fires, but the bird disappears, and a cry from both Agathe and Caspar betray that some strange thing has occurred. Agathe is seen to fall, but she is caught, unhurt, in the protecting arms of the hermit, the talisman he had given having preserved her life; the bullet, however,

has found a victim, for the wicked Caspar receives it in his heart,—whither it had been directed by Zamiel when his purpose was defeated by the hermit,—thus paying the penalty of his misdeeds and satisfying the lust of the infernal one.

Agathe awakens as if from a dream, and asks what has occurred, at which evidence of life Max and Kuno express thanks to Heaven, and the chorus sing a pæan, and point to the dying Caspar, who feebly utters :

"Her protector I saw in the holy
man beside her,
Heaven has triumphed, my fate
is earned!"

Zamiel now slowly rises, but is visible only to the closing eyes of Caspar, his victim, who curses the demon with his expiring breath.

Max, bewildered by the shocking events of the moment, confesses that he has violated the mandates of Heaven by heeding the temptations of Zamiel and his seducer, and shamefully awaits sentence of the Prince. Agathe implores the Prince

for mercy, begging that her lover may not be torn from her embrace, and Kuno, Annchen and the chorus unite their appeals,

testifying to the skill, strength and fidelity of Max, whose passionate devotion and unmeasurable love alone could make him forget his obligations to them and his duty to God. The Prince, unmoved, severely answers :

"No ; no ; your pleas are fruitless said ;
For such as he too spotless is the maid.
His crime a punishment must find ;
Justice demands that he shall be confined !"

The hermit enters at this juncture, who, betraying his compassion, pleads with the Prince that such a penalty is too severe to fit the offence, which was through the persuasion of love rather than the prompting of a criminal instinct. This argument begets the sympathy of the Prince, who bestows his pardon, and the marriage being permitted, Agathe proffers her gratitude, and the chorus closes the final act with a hymn of thanksgiving :

"With prayers for thy mercy our voices we raise,
With thanks for thy goodness we render thee praise!"







La Dame Blanche

(AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING BY WILLIAM DE LEFTWICH DODGE)

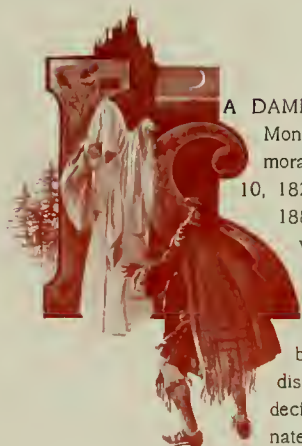
ANNA—*'This castle belongs to you
And this gold is thine;
Thy father formerly trusted it to us,
To purchase your inheritance.'*

LAST ACT AND SCENE.

LA DAME BLANCHE.

(THE WHITE LADY.)

MUSIC BY BOIELDIEU—WORDS BY SCRIBE.



A DAME BLANCHE is an adaptation from two of Walter Scott's novels, "Guy Mannering," and "The Monastery," thus combining the weirdly superstitious with the elements of higher intellectuality and moral responsibility. This famous opera was first produced at the Opera Comique, Paris, December 10, 1825, which then stood on what afterwards was the site of the old Salle Favart, destroyed by fire in 1887 with a loss of nearly three hundred souls. From the ashes rose the new Opera Comique, that was dedicated with imposing ceremonies, December 7, 1898, upon which splendid occasion "La Dame Blanche" was sung before President Faure, members of his cabinet, senators, Russian grand dukes and all the leading diplomatic, artistic and literary notabilities of Paris.

The scene of Boieldieu's masterpiece is laid in Scotland, and the story of the opera may be rehearsed thus briefly: The Lord of Avenel, described as a zealous partisan of the Stuarts, is disgraced after the battle of Culloden (April 16, 1746, where the fate of the house of Stuart was decided), and is sent into exile, with his wife, who volunteers to share all his sufferings. The unfortunate couple leave behind them, to the mercies of Gaveston, who has long been their steward, Anna, an adopted child, and their infant son, Julian. Before going away, Lady Avenel discloses to Anna that a considerable treasure is concealed in the statue of the White Lady that stands in the great hall of the castle, and requests her to use it in buying the Avenel estate should there at any time be danger of it passing out of the family. This request Anna considers she is bound to perform, and gives her solemn promise.

Gaveston is a cruel and selfish person who, to promote his own advantage, neglects the child, and suffers him to grow up in ignorance, and without knowledge of his parentage. Before attaining his majority Julian, who is called George Brown, is sent to sea, and afterwards becomes a soldier. He is dangerously wounded in battle, but a charming young lady, whose name he has not learned, cares for him tenderly until his complete recovery. Some time after, while on a furlough, he wanders back to Avenel Castle, where he meets a worthy farmer couple, named Dickson, whose good will he obtains by acting as godfather to their child. From these he learns that Avenel Castle is soon to be sold at auction, and that Gaveston, believing there is no heir to the property, expects to buy it; but the tenants regard him with such disfavor that they have joined their fortunes to bid against him, hoping for assistance from the White Lady, who is superstitiously regarded by the people as the protecting spirit of Avenel House. Anna is also determined to lend her aid to frustrate Gaveston's designs, to accomplish which purpose she appears in the village disguised as the White Lady, and writes a note to Dickson, who has been commissioned by the tenants to bid for the property, to meet her at midnight in Avenel Castle. He is afraid to answer the summons, however, but permits George Brown to go in his stead, who, finding the mysterious personage at the appointed place, fearlessly engages her in conversation. He is unable to penetrate her disguise, but she instantly recognizes him

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"The favoring goodness of heaven
Has given us a son we beg you be his godfather."

as the soldier whose wounds she often dressed, and assures him he will shortly meet the nurse to whose tender care he owes his life. She also tells him to bid for the property when it is offered for sale, and to trust her to supply the means of payment, which he promises to do.

The auction sale of Avenel estate takes place on the following day, and George Brown becomes the purchaser, but as the money must be paid before high noon, he is in sad dilemma, not yet knowing how it may be obtained. Anna for a while is in equal distress, for she is unable to find the statue. While conducting her search she overhears Gaveston telling a friend that he recognizes George Brown as the lost heir to the Avenel estate, and directly after George, accompanied by many of the tenants, goes through the rooms of the castle, which he discovers to be strangely familiar. The tenants sing to him an old Avenel war song, which so revives his youthful memories that he joins them in the chorus. In the meantime, the hour of twelve is near, and Gaveston demands payment of the price bid for the property. George confesses that he is moneyless, and is upon the point of explaining his situation, when suddenly the White Lady appears on the pedestal which the statue had long occupied, and in solemn voice declares George Brown to be Julian, the heir to Avenel, whereupon she delivers into his hands a casket that contains a sum of money large enough to pay the purchase. Gaveston, maddened by this defeat of his evil plans, rushes upon the mysterious lady and rudely tears off her veil, when, to his astonishment and discomfiture, he finds that it is Anna, his ward. George is transported by recognizing in Anna the nurse to whom he lost his heart in the hospital, and the curtain falls upon a happy termination.

Act I, Scene I.—The opening scene shows the interior of a Scotch farm house, with a beautiful rural prospect in the background, at which a party of peasants have assembled to attend the christening of an infant son of Dickson and Jenny, a worthy couple. Dickson discovers that there is no proper person present who will act as godfather, as the sheriff he has expected to fill the office of sponsor cannot attend. While Dickson is lamenting this ill fortune, a soldier appears on the mountain, who comes down presently and asks for lodgings and something to eat. He is hospitably welcomed, and entertains the people with a song, "A pleasant life the soldier leads," etc., which is admirably rendered and loudly applauded. So pleased is Dickson with the soldier that Jenny,

the farmer wife, requests him to act as godfather at the christening of her child, which he gladly consents to do.

In the following scene, as the people gather about the young soldier, charmed by his cheerful manners, Dickson asks his name, to which the stranger replies that so little remains of his childhood memories he cannot recall much of his youth or estate, except that he has remembrance, indistinct, of a fine home, many servants, a pretty girl, and an old woman who sang Scotch songs; that he was taken on board a vessel to serve under a man who claimed to be uncle, but whose treatment was so harsh that at the end of a few years of slavery he escaped and enlisted as a soldier to King George. Some time after, while charging a redoubt, he was wounded and taken unconscious to a near-by cottage, where a young girl, of sweet and enchanting expression, nursed him to recovery, a girl so beautiful that his heart has not yet ceased to throb with love at thought of her, though he never learned her name. Having related his brief tale of adventure, the soldier tells Dickson that he is known as George Brown, a title easy to remember at least, even if it be not a true one. The good couple find him a delightful guest, and urge him to accept their hospitality, which he, both tired and hungry, cannot refuse. The conversation that ensues round the table is of a vivacious character, until George inquires if there are any objects of special interest in the neighborhood. To this the farmer answers that Avenel Castle is near by, a famous structure, though now in much ruin through neglect of its present occupant. George declares his eagerness to visit the castle on the morrow, but Dickson admonishes him that the time is least auspicious, for

"No longer the war dins rattle,
Stilled is the voice of battle;
The soldier seeks his home again,
The lover comes his bride to gain.
Welcome! hail! hear the joyful cry,
The world forgets, but love can't die."



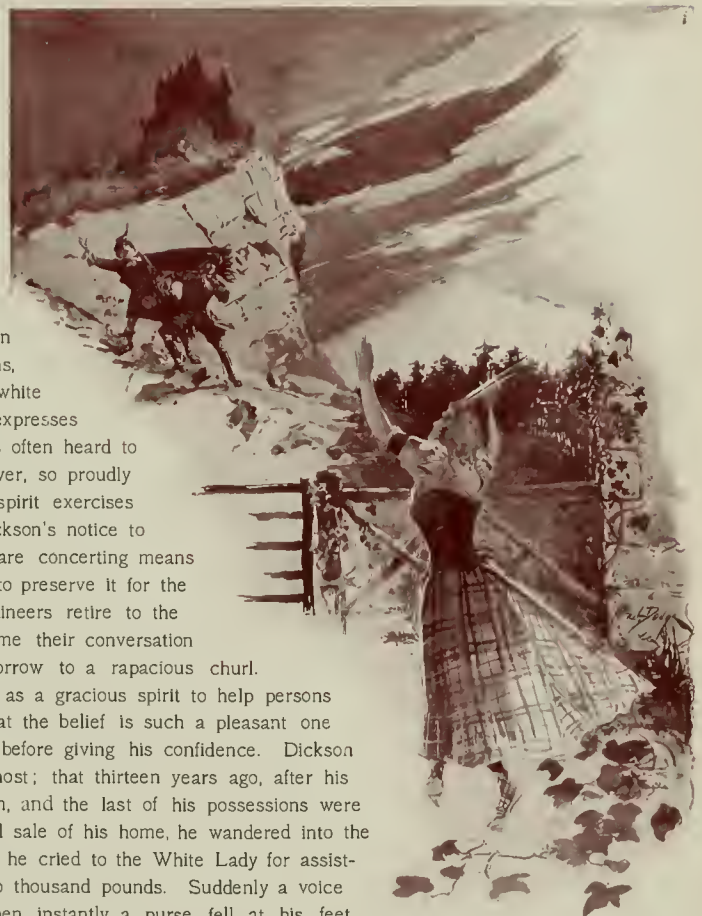
"You have sworn to obey me;
The time has arrived. I require your assistance."

on yesterday Gaveston, the steward, arrived and says he will not leave until after the auction of the property. George wonders what ill-circumstance compels the sale of so fine an estate, to which Dickson and Jenny explain that it was the property of the Earl of Avenel, who, after the battle of Culloden, was sent with his wife into exile, and both have since died; that Gaveston was left in charge of the estate, and has so managed its affairs that the beautiful domain is to be sold to-morrow to pay the creditors; but while the property has gone to ruin, Gaveston has grown rich from its revenues, and now wishes to become the proprietor, and thus obtain the title of Earl of Avenel. Dickson expresses his indignation at the designs of the crafty steward, but Jenny bids him be less solicitous, for that last night Gabriel, the farm boy, saw the White Lady of Avenel walking on the ruins and battlements of the castle, who, Jenny proceeds to explain to George, has been the patron spirit of the house of Avenel for four hundred years, an apparition that never fails to appear when some great misfortune threatens, and is usually to be seen wandering on the turret tops in long white clothes, holding a harp that gives forth celestial sounds. George expresses his anxiety to hear this wondrous song which the White Lady is often heard to sing, and Jenny gratifies his wish by rendering, "See yonder tower, so proudly rising," etc., wherein she tells of the protecting care that the spirit exercises over the affairs of Avenel. At this juncture Gabriel directs Dickson's notice to a gathering of neighborhood farmers in an adjoining room, who are concerting means to prevent Avenel Castle falling into the hands of Gaveston, and to preserve it for the heirs of the house should any hereafter appear. All the mountaineers retire to the next room, leaving George, Dickson and Jenny alone, who resume their conversation about the estate that is advertised to be sacrificed on the morrow to a rapacious churl. Seriously, Dickson asks George if he believes in the White Lady as a gracious spirit to help persons in distress, the protectress of Avenel house? George admits that the belief is such a pleasant one he would fain entertain it, but wishes first to behold the vision before giving his confidence. Dickson declares that he has himself been a beneficiary of this goodly ghost; that thirteen years ago, after his father's death, misfortunes of many kinds were heaped upon him, and the last of his possessions were about to be taken from him, when, the night before the advertised sale of his home, he wandered into the vaults of the old castle where, casting himself upon a cold stone he cried to the White Lady for assistance, promising to give himself body and goods for a loan of two thousand pounds. Suddenly a voice answered, "I accept the terms; remember your promise!" when instantly a purse fell at his feet. With the money thus gotten, all debts were paid, since which time great prosperity has attended his labors, and a splendid wife and beautiful boy were given to fill his measure of blessings. At this relation Dickson passes out, when a pretty duet is sung by George and Jenny, who ridicule the fears felt by Dickson and end their interview with a kiss.

In Scene VIII, Dickson comes rushing back onto the stage, and with a terrified expression holds up a paper which he says was just handed to him by a little dwarf in the middle of the road who then strangely disappeared. After some persuasion, Dickson gains the courage to read: "You have sworn to obey me; the time has arrived; I require your assistance; this evening be at the castle gate and ask for hospitality in the name of St. Julian of Avenel. (Signed) The White Lady." Both Dickson and Jenny are put into dreadful alarm by this mysterious message, which they have little mind to unravel by personal investigation, but George volunteers to keep the engagement, even at the peril of meeting the infernal one himself, and despite the horrible alarms that his host tries to excite.

A beautifully graceful trio concludes the first act, Dickson undertaking to guide George to the castle gate, but having a fear himself he gladly hearkens to his wife's persuasions and pledges her that he will go no further.

Act II.—When the curtain rises upon the next act a large gothic chamber is shown, in which appears Margaret, once the nurse of Anna and Julian, is sitting at her spinning-wheel singing a plaintive romanza, expressing her hopes to see the long-lost heir of Avenel before she dies. After indulging reveries of the dear old times, she rises and goes to the



"I feel a mortal terror
In vain we wish to arrest his steps."

window where, looking out, she is alarmed by a light that beams from the untenanted ruins, which she imagines betrays the presence of the White Lady come to announce the death or return of Julian. At this moment Anna comes in, covered with a Scotch cloak, and holding an unlighted lantern in her hand. Removing her cloak she tells Margaret she is just returned from the castle which she tried to enter, but found every door sealed. At Margaret's request to know how her affairs have gone during the long years of her absence, Anna relates the singular incidents that have befallen her since Lord and Lady Avenel left the country, eight years before. Among other strange happenings she tells of how she learned of the deaths of the lord and lady, and how she nursed a handsome young soldier who was wounded in an engagement at the very gates of a country place in France where she was stopping. She sighs for the soldier, whom she was compelled to leave by the sudden return of Gaveston, but declares that his image is fixed firmly in her heart. She thereupon suggests that Julian may yet be living, and that their duty is to serve his memory, and if necessary to sacrifice themselves to save his inheritance, for it were a shame to them should he return homeless, a stranger to his father's halls. Margaret is all attention, and eagerly promises to lend her aid, but wonders what may be done! Anna bids her take courage, for she has a design to protect the estate from falling into the possession of Gaveston. While they are thus talking the sound of a horn is heard that announces the approach of Gaveston. Hurriedly she tells Margaret to prepare a room for him, and as Margaret goes out Gaveston enters. He engages Anna in a conversation about ghosts, and especially the spectre of the White Lady, which he pronounces a harmful superstition fit only for ignorant farmer folk. Changing his tone to one of confidence, Gaveston informs her that he has just supped with Mr. Mac-Irton, Justice of the Peace, with whom he has so arranged matters that the estate may be sold at daybreak; that though he is now only a steward, by purchasing the property he will become a peer, and the Earl of Avenel. Having thus sought to impress her with his coming importance, Gaveston tells Anna that he is aware of the fact that before Lady Avenel left for France with her exiled husband, she confided to her care a mysterious paper which, as her guardian, he now requests her to produce and permit him to read. Anna takes some alarm at Gaveston's manner, but to defeat his measures she tells him she destroyed the paper, and that the secret she will never divulge. Gaveston is insistent upon his guardian rights, but ceases his importunities when a bell rings without.

In Scene IV Margaret reappears to announce that a stalwart youth, seeking refuge from the storm of this dark night, is without, asking for an asylum in the mansion. Gaveston grudges him hospitality, but admits the stranger, who enters from the bottom of the stage as Anna leaves by the right door. It is a handsome person who confronts the steward of Avenel Castle, and when Gaveston desires to know whom he has the honor of receiving, the stranger answers that he is one of the king's officers, an ensign in the Eighteenth Infantry. Asked what has brought him at such late hour to this ancient edifice, the officer replies that never having been in the country before, he admires greatly this stately mansion, and the elements being inclement, he desires shelter, especially as the ghosts of these mountains may make it uncomfortable bivouacking in the open. Gaveston laughs at these allusions, which he knows refer to the White Lady, and bidding his visitor good night retires, followed by Margaret, who, gazing intently upon the stranger, thinks she recognizes a face known to her before.

Scene VI.—George being now left alone relights the fire, that has gone out, and placing his pistol on a table sings an exquisite tenor cavatina, "Come, gentle lady," etc. As his song concludes the sound of a harp is heard, and Anna enters through a panel of the wainscot. She is dressed in white and covered with a white veil that gives her the airy appearance of a ghost, which George takes her to be. Anna, however, immediately recognizes him as the soldier wounded at Hastenbeck whom she nursed to recovery, and describes to him the incident. He becomes intensely agitated by this great mystery, and tries hard to explore it, but she bids him be less eager and be ready to receive her orders on the morrow. He swears to obey her, whoever she may be, and to devote himself to her service, however desperate. Thereupon in recitative she tells him that



"Is it really the case, Miss Anna,
That you believe in such dreams?"

this estate belongs to the Earl of Avenel, but that a greedy and cruel steward has designs to secure it, which she asks him to assist her in defeating. After declaring their purpose in a pretty duet, Anna is about to leave, when George stops

her with reminder of her promise that the one he loves shall soon appear. To this she tenders her hand and pledges on the morrow this promise shall be fulfilled. As Anna disappears through the panel, Gaveston comes upon the scene, to whom George rehearses his adventure with the White Lady, whose champion henceforth he declares himself to be. Gaveston laughs at what he calls an idle fancy, whereupon George frankly informs him of the evil fate which she has prophesied will overtake his plans to acquire the Avenel estate. Gaveston is so far undisturbed by these warnings that boastfully he answers: "Well, the event will prove whether she or I have the greater power," and declares that in an hour this

valuable property will pass to him by purchase. The morning is breaking, and George excuses himself to take a walk round the park while waiting for the promised orders of the White Lady.

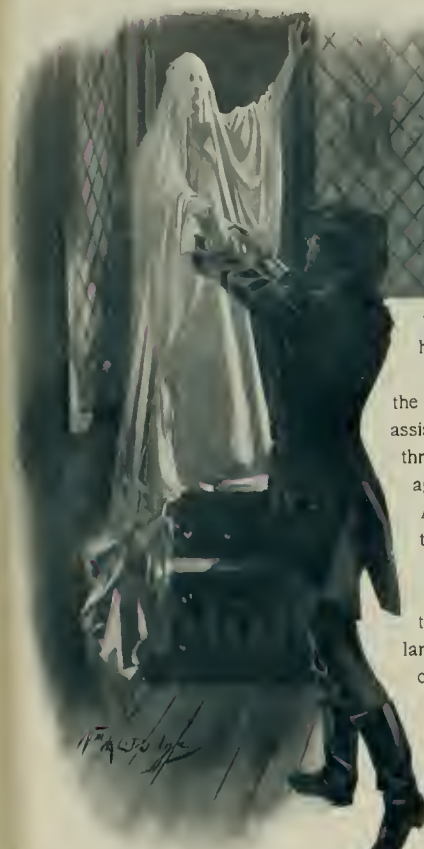
Scene IX—George, Gaveston, Dickson, Jenny, Margaret, farmers and vassals come upon the stage all voicing grief at the prospect of the sale of Avenel Castle, when Mac-Irton and his assistants enter and seat themselves about a table. Dickson is surrounded by farmers who have thrown their fortunes into the scales with that of Dickson's, who is commissioned by them to bid against Gaveston. Mac-Irton now rises, and in the name of the king reads the order of sale. An attendant thereupon lights a wax candle, according to a custom then prevalent, and also of the law that prohibited the offering of bids after the candle has burned out. Mac-Irton now announces that the sale is started by a bid of twenty thousand crowns, at which Dickson offers twenty-five thousand. The two bid spiritedly against each other, raising each offer five thousand crowns until Gaveston advances his bid to one hundred thousand crowns, a sum so large that all the farmers, combining their wealth, cannot increase it. Gaveston manifests his glee over the triumph which he believes is certain by saying loudly to George, "Well, my young friend, speak! How does it look now? In spite of the White Lady and her honored name, I told you I would carry it off!"

The candle is now nearly burned out, and consternation seizes all the farmers, who believe the estate will certainly pass to Gaveston since they cannot by further pledge of money raise his bid. George, too, is in a passion, and upon the point of discrediting the White Lady, when Anna, who has assumed her ordinary dress, enters from the right, and stealing up behind George, whispers: "Silence! You know who sent me, obey. Advance Gaveston's bid!" George is amazed, and though unable to understand this mystery, as the crier calls for the last time, "One hundred thousand crowns," George shouts to him: "Stay, I bid a thousand livres more!" At this new bidder Gaveston looks aghast, and in a rage protests, but the Justice is compelled,

"How beautiful is this hand,
How soft for a goblin's!"

against his will, to accept the offer, and so the bidding is renewed, each advancing upon the offer of the other until Gaveston, livid with rage, proffers four hundred thousand francs. George is about to increase the price, at the instigation of Anna, when Gaveston, thinking to deter George from assuming such immense responsibility, asks the Justice to explain the conditions imposed by law upon the purchaser. In compliance therewith, Mac-Irton reads: "On the same day, at twelve o'clock, the amount of the sale must be deposited in actual money with me, in default of which the successful bidder shall be consigned to prison for such time as the trial judge shall fix." At the danger that thus confronts him, George trembles and would lose his resolution but for the fresh encouragements given him by Anna, at whose urgings he offers aloud five hundred thousand francs! This bid is so great that Gaveston is unable to raise it, at which George whispers to him, "You must agree with me now that the White Lady is right."

Sale of the property having been made to George, the Justice asks his name and rank, and is thus answered: "I am George Brown, an ensign in his Majesty's service, with a salary of twelve hundred francs, and surely I have not spent it foolishly, seeing I have bought so fine an estate with my savings." The Justice declares him the buyer, though he marvels whence will come so large a sum of money, to be paid in so short a time, and threatens to enforce the law rigidly if its full terms be not strictly complied with at the appointed hour of noon, and the second act closes



with an ensemble of seven voices that is a favorite part of the opera, beautiful as it is remarkable for ingenious treatment.

Act III.—When the curtain rises again it is to disclose a spacious gothic chamber, reached from below by two flights of stairs, at the bottom of which are to be seen three pedestals that support statues, and one that is vacant. The act opens with a prayer by Anna, followed by a sentimental air in which she discloses the love she cherishes for Julian and the noble asylum in which she spent so many happy days, which is interrupted by the entrance of Margaret, who comes to tell her that Mac-Irton has removed the seals that have long closed the castle, and that she may now inspect the apartments her eyes have desired so much to again behold. Lapsing into reveries, Margaret woefully tells Anna that it was here she brought her up, as well also poor Julian, until he was six years of age, when, alas, misfortune came that divorced her from that happiness, and scattered the family, Lord and Lady Avenel to foreign shores, where death has ended their sorrow, and Julian, her tender charge, to lands she knows not where. Recovering from her melancholy reflections, Margaret wonders who this George may be who has bid so large a sum for the estate, yet evidently not for his own account. To Margaret's questions as to George's riches, Anna frankly tells her in confidence that he has nothing, but that some good genius has brought him hither for a wise purpose, to accomplish the redemption of Avenel Castle. "Tell me," she urges, "you who have so long lived here, where stands the statue of the White Lady, which I have searched for in vain through all the rooms?"

"It stood in the reception hall long ago," is Margaret's answer, "but now I perceive it is disappeared." At this

disclosure Anna cries in despair, "Oh, heaven, then we are lost, our projects are defeated!" Urged to explain her meaning, Anna tremblingly reveals to Margaret that here in this castle was concealed the fortune of the house of Avenel, amounting to millions, obtained from immense estates sold by the lord in England; that Lady Avenel had confided this news to her, with the injunction that should Julian reappear in Scotland to tell him that in the statue of the White Lady will be found an ebony casket which contains the fortune of his ancestors.

Margaret betrays great depression, but suddenly recalls an incident that may explain the statue's disappearance: "On the night that Lord Avenel went away," she relates, "as I left the castle by a secret passage, I heard measured footsteps approaching, when concealing myself behind a pillar I saw, even though the place was very dark, the statue of the White Lady slowly descend the stairs and bury herself in the wall near the secret passage." Anna is all excitement at this revelation, and feverishly urges Margaret to show her the way, and as the two exeunt by the left door, George, farmers, and vassals enter by the right, the latter hailing him as master. Gazing about him, at the walls hung with gothic arms and armor, George discovers a strange familiarity in the scenes, which impresses him with the feeling that he has been here before, a witchery which he

"No, it is no illusion; it is she herself!"

attributes, however, to magic of the White Lady. Two girls bring in keys to the castle, which they deliver to him as master of the house, and at the same time the chorus render that sweetest of Scottish ballads, "Robin Adair," at the strains of which, rolling in their beautiful stateliness through the long deserted halls, George startles and tears well up in his eyes as he tries to recall the place where first he heard it. Following this exquisite ballad the chorus and solo sing, "O house of Avenel, ancient and strong," etc., that serves to bring to mind old memories.

All the peasants and vassals pass out after singing the olden airs, leaving George alone, and still wondering why the scenes and songs seem so familiar. While

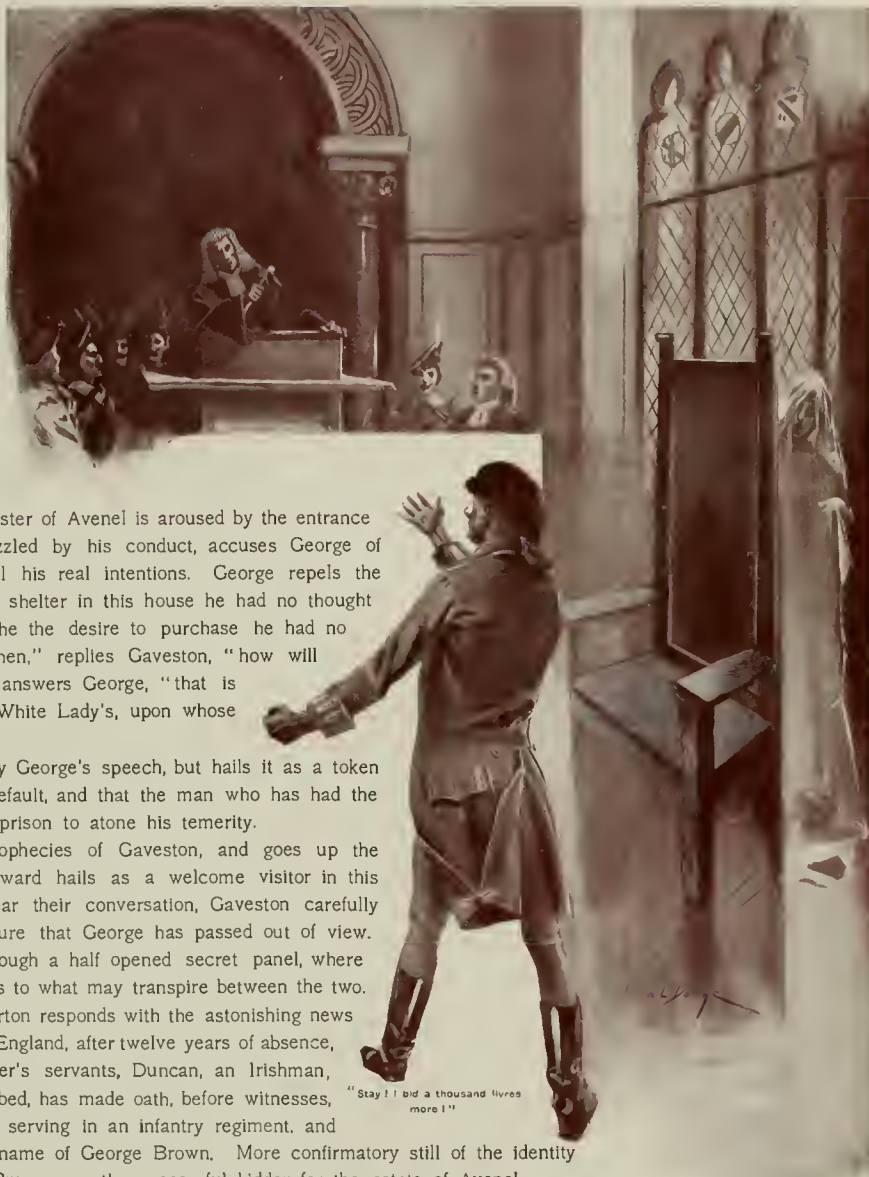
thus pre-occupied with his fancies the new master of Avenel is aroused by the entrance of Gaveston, who, deeply chagrined and puzzled by his conduct, accuses George of having had recourse to deceptions to conceal his real intentions. George repels the charge and explains that when he applied for shelter in this house he had no thought of becoming its proprietor, since even had he the desire to purchase he had no money with which to gratify the wish. "Then," replies Gaveston, "how will you pay the price, large as it is?" "Ah," answers George, "that is no business of mine, being an affair of the White Lady's, upon whose account I made the purchase."

Gaveston is yet more sorely puzzled by George's speech, but hails it as a token that he may yet be owner of the castle by default, and that the man who has had the courage to oppose his plans may be sent to prison to atone his temerity.

George exhibits unconcern at the prophecies of Gaveston, and goes up the stairway as Mac-Irton enters, whom the steward hails as a welcome visitor in this hour of trouble. Wishing that none may hear their conversation, Gaveston carefully shuts the bottom door, looking up to make sure that George has passed out of view. On the left, however, Anna is to be seen, through a half opened secret panel, where she cautiously conceals herself to be a witness to what may transpire between the two. Gaveston asks for information, to which Mac-Irton responds with the astonishing news that Julian, Earl of Avenel, has reappeared in England, after twelve years of absence, having been carried away by one of his father's servants, Duncan, an Irishman, that this same Duncan, being upon his death-bed, has made oath, before witnesses, that Julian, his former charge, is at present serving in an infantry regiment, and that the records show he enlisted under the name of George Brown. More confirmatory still of the identity of Julian is the fact that this same George Brown was the successful bidder for the estate of Avenel.

Gaveston is shocked by Mac-Irton's revelation, but consoles himself somewhat by the belief that George is ignorant of his birthright, and that even if he be recognized as heir to the estate he has not the means to redeem the property. The utmost haste is necessary, however, to declare a forfeiture of the successful bid, and the two pass out to concert fresh means for completing their purpose as Anna enters through the secret panel.

In a recitative Anna tells of her feelings at the discovery she has made that George Brown, the man whose life she saved, and to whom her heart has surrendered, is the true heir to Avenel, whose newly discovered rank and treasure she fears will now become an obstacle to prevent a consummation of the hopes she has entertained to be his wife. Anna is aroused from her gloomy forebodings by the hurried entrance of Margaret, who gleefully tells her that Julian will soon return. Asked whence comes her knowledge, she answers that the presage cannot be false; that with her own



"Stay! I bid a thousand lives more!"

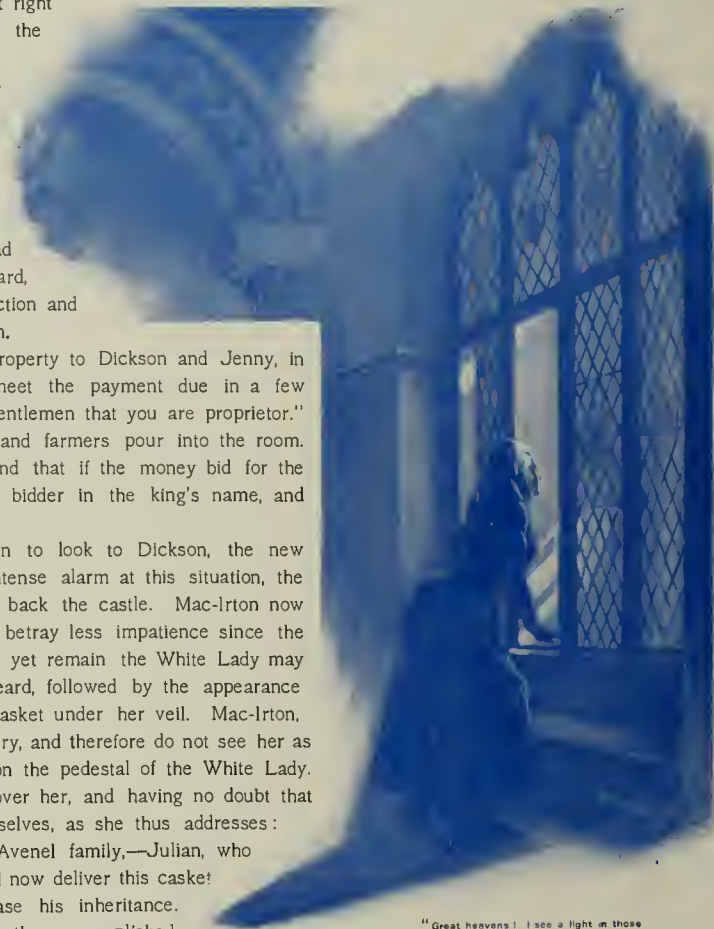
eyes she has seen the statue of the White Lady resume its accustomed place in the Knight's Hall, and that as she knows Julian to be a personification of goodness, he will immediately bestow her hand upon Mr. George, the handsome young officer. Anna turns pale at this declaration of her old nurse, and tells her that this very instant they must leave the spot and to remain silent—for Julian's sake. As Margaret retires, Anna resolves to double the mystery by concealing from Julian the part she has played in securing his inheritance, determined to go away, that he may never be embarrassed by any sense of obligation to her, saying: "Yes, let us increase the mystery that conceals me from his eyes; may he be rich! May he be happy! but let him not suspect the hand that restored him to his inheritance; let him never know the poor girl that loved him, and sacrificed her happiness for him. And you, my ancient masters, you, my benefactors, I have thus paid you my debts."

In Scene XI Jenny runs in, and all excitement announces to the sorrowful and love-lorn Anna that Mac-Irton and his men-of-law have come to the castle, evidently to declare a forfeiture of the bid, as the hour of high noon is near at hand. Anna is thus aroused to the necessity of quick action, and dashes out of the room without giving the farmer's wife any explanation of her sudden flight. George now appears in the gallery, talking to himself of the White Lady whom he constantly seeks, but cannot find. Descending the stairs, he discovers Jenny, whose back being turned, he thinks may be his dear apparition. Jenny asks him why he looks at her so intently, to which he answers that he is not sure she is not the White Lady in disguise, and curiously inquires, "Are you quite certain that you are Mistress Dickson?" At this instant farmer Dickson appears, who, having overheard the strange question, answers it himself, with some irritation: "Yes, sir; it is true. She is my wife, and it is not right in you to raise any doubts on the subject, after all the wrong you have already done me!"

Jenny becomes indignant at her husband's insinuations and demands an explanation of his covert charges, whereupon Dickson begins to complain of his ill fortune in having sent George to meet the White Lady, instead of going himself at her invitation, by which the castle and several millions of money have been given to George which he himself might have had. Jenny accuses her husband of being an arrant coward, else he would have obeyed the White Lady's injunction and received the gifts she made to a more resolute person.

George magnanimously offers to abandon the property to Dickson and Jenny, in order to stop their dispute, doubting his ability to meet the payment due in a few moments, and says: "You can declare before these gentlemen that you are proprietor." At the same moment Gaveston, Mac-Irton, Margaret and farmers pour into the room. Mac-Irton announces that it is now twelve o'clock, and that if the money bid for the estate be not instantly produced, he will arrest the bidder in the king's name, and convey him to prison.

With a show of levity, George tells Mac-Irton to look to Dickson, the new proprietor, who will take his place. But exhibiting intense alarm at this situation, the poor farmer exhorts George for mercy's sake to take back the castle. Mac-Irton now grows importunate, at which George advises that he betray less impatience since the clock has not yet struck; that in the moments which yet remain the White Lady may succor him. Immediately the sound of a harp is heard, followed by the appearance of Anna, in the gallery, dressed in white, holding a casket under her veil. Mac-Irton, Gaveston and others have their backs towards the gallery, and therefore do not see her as she descends the left-hand stairs and places herself on the pedestal of the White Lady. As she takes her position, the people turn and discover her, and having no doubt that it is the good spirit of Avenel house, prostrate themselves, as she thus addresses: "In this castle is the heir and last branch of the Avenel family,—Julian, who shall receive the homage of his vassals, and to whom I now deliver this casket of gold, which his father entrusted to me to purchase his inheritance. I must now depart, and let no one follow me." Having thus accomplished



"Great heavens! I see a light in those untenanted ruins!"

her generous purpose, Anna descends the stairs deliberately, and placing the casket on the pedestal, advances to the centre of the stage, but at some distance from Julian. The people open a passage way without daring to look at her, but Julian is so infatuated that he feels constrained to follow; his heart is beating with a passion, wild, impetuous, while gratitude invokes him to make some manifestation of the appreciation he feels. Margaret and Dickson, still awed by the mystery,

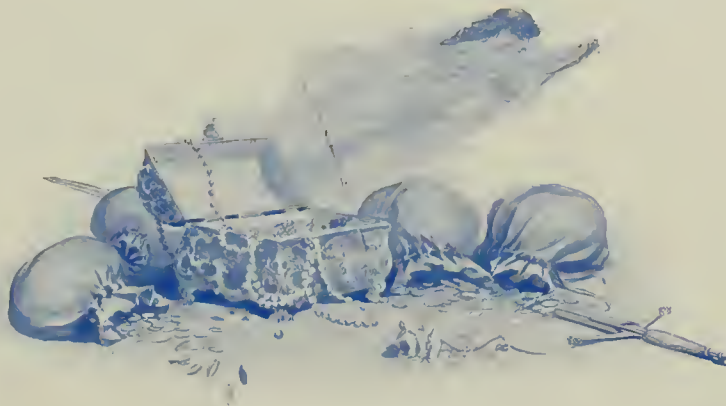
believing it is indeed a goodly spirit, the White Lady of common tradition, restrain Julian, telling him it were sacrilege to disregard the mandates of the heavenly phantom, whose actions he should not presume to question, and whose haunts are sacred from the invasion of mortals.

Gaveston, despite the remarkable manifestation of the potential phantom, that has circumvented his plans by presentation of material means, is not so superstitiously inclined as to believe in the existence of spirits, whatever the evidence disclosed, and in a rage over his discomfiture he intercepts Anna as she is about to leave the stage, and, seizing her hand, he drags her forward, declaring "No! though the earth should open beneath my feet, be you who you may, you shall not go!"

The people who see Gaveston's rude act are dumfounded with awe and surprise, and in terror caution him beware her anger, which they fear may fall not only upon him, but upon themselves also. Anna is herself greatly frightened by the violent demeanor of Gaveston, perceiving that exposure of her identity and the adventurous ruse she has adopted is at hand, but she stolidly confronts him as he fiercely utters: "I will expose this fatal mystery, and the secret enemy that has caused miscarriage of my desires;" whereupon he tears off her veil, when lo, there stands revealed, to the astonishment of all present, Anna, personator of the White Lady!

Julian clasps her in a loving embrace, and joyfully exclaims: "I have found her that I love, to whom in ecstasy I have pledged my faith!" She hides her face when answering that, being an apparition, and child of poverty, she cannot aspire to be wife to so rich a lord; but he presses her to consent to share with him the property which he has gained through her efforts, and to accept the undying love and gratitude which he has to offer her as the most worthy mistress of Avenel Castle. Anna cannot withstand the promptings of her heart, gives Julian her hand, and the curtain falls upon a scene of congratulation and felicitation.

"I will discover this deep mystery
And the secret that follows my steps!"



A SKETCH OF BOIELDIEU



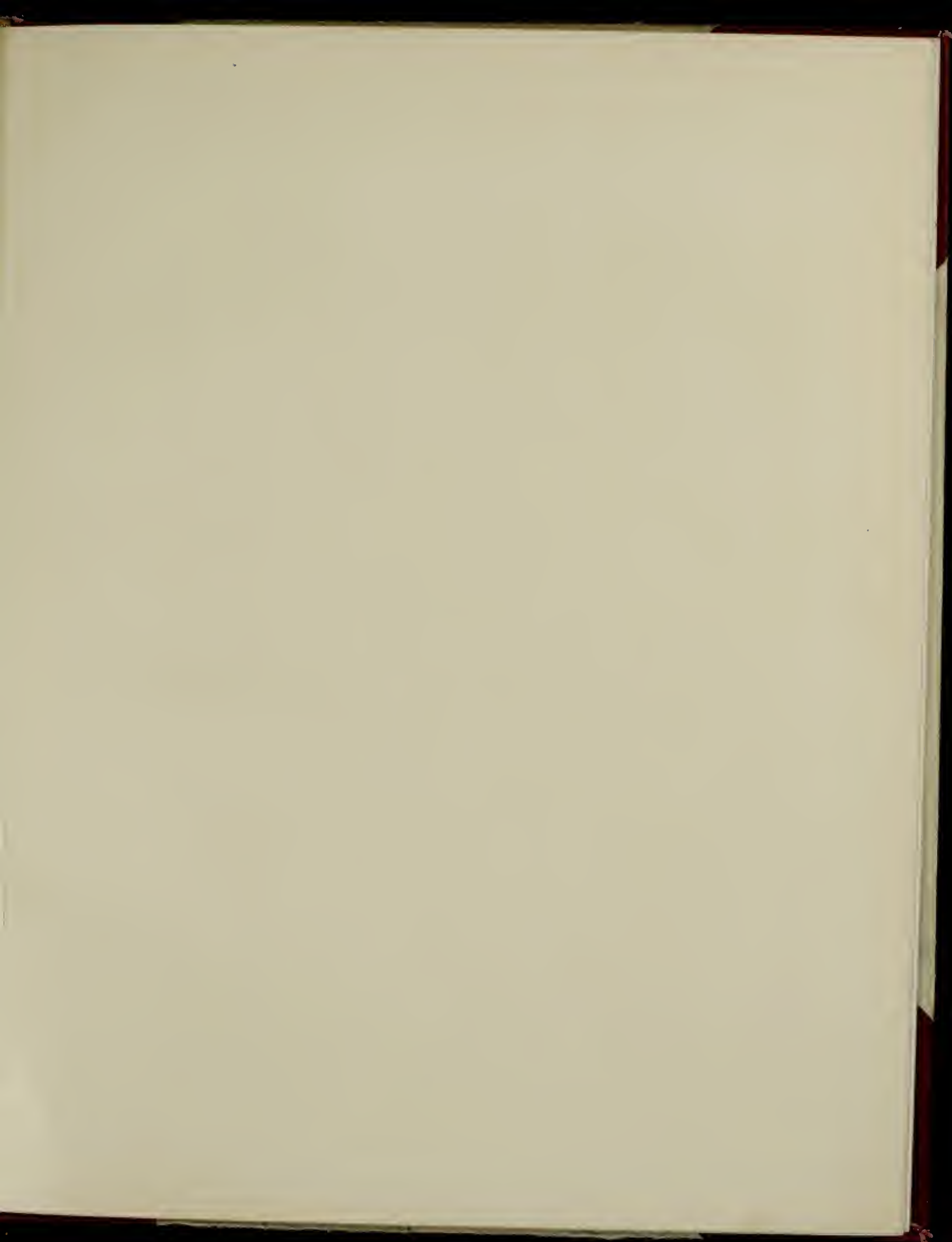
FRANÇOIS ADRIEN BOIELDIEU was born in the old French city of Rouen, December 16, 1775, and died at the village of Jarcy, October 8, 1834. His advantages were considerable, for his father was secretary to Archbishop Larochevoucauld, and a man of some means, while his mother increased the family revenues by keeping a millinery shop. Little is known of his childhood, except that he was a pupil of Padre Martini, and took organ lessons from Broche, with which latter he lived for a time, until the fear of punishment for having soiled his copy book, by overturning an ink bottle, induced him to run away to Paris. Some time afterwards he was found by his parents, and brought back to Rouen, but he was too intractable to be kept at his studies, and his musical education was therefore superficial. But he had a remarkable native talent, and though he despised the technique of music, and could not be interested in the study of harmony, he had a great ambition to write for the stage. His first effort in this direction was an operetta, "La fille Coupable" (the guilty child), founded, it is believed, upon his own escapade, that was produced in his native city in 1793, and was so favorably received that in the following year he wrote "Rosalie and Myrza," which, however, was such a failure that he decided to quit Rouen at once for Paris, a journey which, for want of money, he had to make on foot.

Boieldieu had an interesting personality, and was a man capable of great development had he applied himself, but he chose rather to indulge his ease, and above all his convivial temperament. He was not long in Paris before he became acquainted with not a few celebrities, who appreciated him for his talent as a composer of pretty ballads, and for his fine execution on the pianoforte. After becoming acquainted with Cherubini, he was persuaded to undertake serious work, and in 1797 he composed "The Swiss Family," which had a splendid run at the Theatre Feydeau, followed the next year with "The Caliph of Bagdad," which scored a magnificent success, and secured for him appointment as professor of pianoforte at the Conservatory.

It was three years after taking position at the Conservatory, that his next opera, "My Aunt Aurora," appeared, which was also successful. About this time he married Clotilde Mafleuoy, a famous dancer, who proved to be such a hector that to escape her he went to St. Petersburg, where he accepted an engagement to write three operas a year for the Czar. He remained in Russia eight years, but his work there was of so little importance that no record is preserved telling of his compositions. He returned to Paris in 1811, and the next year witnessed the production of his "Jean of Paris," which had a remarkable success. After this came his "Little Red Chaperon," and his appointment (1818) as professor of composition at the Conservatory. The next seven years Boieldieu produced nothing of consequence, until 1825 his greatest opera, "La Dame Blanche," was presented. He rested upon the laurels gained by this opera for four years, when he wrote "The Two Nights," for which he was offered a large sum, but he preferred to keep it himself, counting upon a repetition of the success of his masterpiece. It proved to be, however, such a pronounced failure that his courage was completely broken, and he went into a steady decline. Laryngeal phthisis appeared, and so increased in violence that he had to give over all physical and mental effort, and the remainder of his life was spent in a vain attempt to find relief. He died at his country seat, at Jarcy, in the south of France, but his remains were brought to Paris, where his funeral was splendidly celebrated at the Invalides. Boieldieu is entitled to rank as the greatest writer of opera comique of his day, and it is doubtful if any composer, except possibly Auber, surpassed him in style and melodic inventions. His orchestration was distinguished by the most charming effects, while his appreciation of theatrical effects was astonishingly great. On the other hand he was little of a harmonist, yet his style was free, and though he wrote easily he spent so much labor in retouching that his work shows very few faults. His productions are very numerous, and cover the entire range of musical composition, but the number that have attained any considerable popularity is small, and less than half a dozen now survive on either the operatic or the concert stage; yet he must be credited with a talent such as made him one of the great composers of his time.



FRANÇOIS ADRIEN BOIELDIEU





Sapho

(AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING BY WILLIAM DE LEFTWICH DODGE)

SAPHO—*"Adieu, my friend, I leave you now forever.
I love you, will love you always,
And weep in saying this my last farewell."*

LAST SCENE OF THE OPERA

SAPHO.

MUSIC BY MASSENET—WORDS BY CAIN AND BERNÈDE.



APHO is a lyrical dramatization of Alphonse Daudet's great novel, upon the merits of which his fame rests most securely. The subject of Massenet's latest production is not that Sappho, greatest and sweetest of Grecian poets, who for unrequited love of Phaon leaped into the sea from the lofty promontory of Leucadia, but Sappho, a fair siren of the Paris Latin Quarter, whose adventures are made the theme for a mingling of tragedy and bathos. The opera was composed for Emma Calvé, who appeared in the title rôle at the initial performance, given at the Paris Opera Comique November 27, 1897, where she was greeted with a furore of approbation during the two months that it occupied the theatre.

Daudet dedicated his romance of "Sappho" to his two sons when they should be twenty years old, and the story he illuminated with the potential fire of his amazing genius. His effort was to draw a psychological portrait, to delineate and describe two persons who, brought together by chance, and without fixed principle, drift unconsciously from youth, gaiety and love, down from and out of life socially, morally and physically in the short space of five years. The opera, however, departs materially from Daudet's romance. Both deal with modern Paris life, but while the novel constructs upon the locale a tale that typifies the love-life in all ages and all countries, the lyrical drama records an episode of the Latin Quarter, that does not rise above the groundling conceptions of a boulevardier. Both, however, have as principal characters Jean and Sappho, the lovers, Caondal, a sculptor, La Borderie, a painter, Cesaïre and Divonne, parents of Jean, and Irene, a young girl. Jean is a young provincial, well brought up, innocent, handsome, and weak, who is sent to Paris by his parents to prepare himself to become a consul, as was his father. Sappho is the Parisienne who fills his life for the following five years. Fanny Legrand is her real name, but Sappho is the title given her by a group of artists with whom she mingles, on account of an artistic resemblance which she is supposed to bear to a marble image known as the "Sappho Statue," made by Caondal.

The scenes of the opera are located, respectively, in Paris, Ville d'Avray, and Avignon; time, the present. The first act introduces a costume ball, at the studio of Caondal, which is attended by Jean, who having recently arrived in Paris from Provence, is so modest through his unfamiliarity with city life that he feels himself strangely out of place, and to escape what he fancies is unfriendly criticism from the people who look at him curiously, he takes refuge behind some large palms at the end of the studio. Here seated upon a divan, screened from observation, he looks sadly out from his retreat upon the gay revelers, and gives full scope to his reflections, wondering what it is that perplexes his heart, and concludes that happiness is not to be found among those who affect, by noisy revels like this, to feel it most. He contrasts this scene of gaiety, of mad abandon, with the true joys of his own blessed home, where the sunshine is brightest, the flowers are most fragrant, and friends are truest. His reveries cease when he notices among the throng a lady dressed as an Egyptian, fascinating of manner, beautiful of face, charming of costume, an object of effusive admiration to several young men whose efforts to embrace her she repulses, singing:

"Adorers, poets, courtiers,
Amorous flatterers, slanderers.
Hiding your sport under a charming smile:
Away, beautiful actors, truly you make me laugh!"

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SAPHO'S LAST LAY ON THE LEUCADIAN PROMONTORY.



The fawning sycophants leave
her, with exclamations of discontent,
whereat she turns and discovers Jean behind
the palms, whom she thus addresses: "What
a charming boy! what lovely eyes!" She boldly
seats herself beside him, and learning his name
and nativity she thus begins her fascinations:
"Do all the boys of Provence have such lovely
blond hair? Are you an artist? No? Ah, that
enchants me, for I am so tired of artists." She supports
her head with her hands, her elbows on her knees, and

looks so softly into his face that she soon gains his confidence and
learns from him the purpose that brought him to Paris, and the name of
the student, La Gournerie, who introduced him to the party. Innocently he inquires
if she knows that La Gournerie is relative of the poet who bears that name, admired
by all for his verses, and to whom he is desirous of being presented. The beautiful
fascinator, who is none other than the siren, Sapho, shrugs her pretty shoulders, and
pushing away the palms, looks out to see if she may find the great poet. Caondal
and several of the men perceive her thus engaged with Jean, the unsophisticated, and
discuss her as the beautiful model who had posed for the Sapho statue, and who is
known as the most heartless demi-mondaine of Paris; a fascinating, wicked
woman, who, though forty years of age, easily passes for twenty, and devotes
herself to destroying young students coming from the country to Paris; a
woman, they take pains to explain, of illegitimate parentage, who has been a
creature of many vicissitudes, poor and rich by turns, mistress to many but
faithful to none; that her last favorite was Froment, an engraver, who, to
keep her in luxury, forged a note, was arrested and sent to prison. Though
there are many to tell of Sapho's wicked career, there are none bold and
honest enough to warn Jean, whom she so beguiles that he becomes a quick
victim to her charms and goes away with her, lovingly and confidingly.

The second act opens with a view of Jean's apartment in Paris, where he
is surprised by an unexpected visit from his parents, who have come to take from
the convent his cousin Irene, their adopted daughter. Irene, the playmate of his
childhood, but now grown to be a beautiful young lady, was first to inspire in him the
divine passion, and as she is now brought before him the love of his youth revives and

"Come with me; come then, Jean!"

he longs to return with her to the old home, "To see again my country of light and sunshine, where the orchards ripen in the setting sun," and thus is introduced the most exquisite duet of the opera, plaintive of the olden time, the sweet days of young love:

Irene.—"It was so nice in that long ago, when we strolled through the woods with Blanchet, our faithful donkey, her bells ringing as she trotted along, and I so proud in the saddle."

Jean.—"And so happy was I holding you by the hand and thinking to myself, how lovely she is."

Irene.—"And you remember how we would amuse ourselves by imitating the pictures of the Bible?"

Jean.—"By the flight in Egypt! Yes, I so well remember, little friend, it was so interesting."

Irene.—"When we ran away to flee the order of Herod, that terrible monarch, whose centurions killed the poor innocents. You remember also how beautiful it was in the meadows, to listen to the call of the curfew, or the wind that whistled so joyously. And when the night came on, all the frightful stories we had read would seem so real to us. Then at the least noise I would take your arm, trembling and frightened, and not daring to speak, we would go in."

Jean.—"Then at the door, on arriving, Irene would kiss me so sweetly and so softly, nor think it wrong."

Irene.—"A sister can kiss her brother; is it not so? and brother surely thou wert to me." (He kisses her.)

This delightful interview is interrupted by the entrance of Jean's parents, who are much pleased to observe the affectionate demonstration between the two. Divonne, his mother, has brought with her several articles of furniture for his room, which she carefully arranges for his comfort, and hangs a picture of his old home above his writing table; she also gives him a lamp around which cluster many dear associations, and thus reminds him:

"Your lamp, my little one!

It is old, but just as bright
As long ago, when by its light
I stitched your little robes
In the quiet autumn night
While you slept, sweet repose, my heart content.
As I rocked and saw you smile
In your dreams of paradise.
Farewell, little one,
For the last time to-day I call you thus.
Work, hope, and trust in the good God."

His mother tenderly kisses Jean good-bye, and the three take their departure, leaving him alone. Sadly he thinks of the dear old home, his heart now sick with desire to return, for he feels so lonely, so friendless in the great city, where individuality is swallowed up by the rush and bustle and garish life that pours through its streets. He sighs

for his mother, for Irene, for Provence, until racked with the torment of vain longings he tries to divert his thoughts by reading, but it is useless, and he falls to weeping. His profound depression is dispelled by the sudden entrance of Fanny (Sapho), who accosts him cheerily and tells him she is come to relieve his loneliness, knowing that he must feel sad since his parents departed. With softness and affected reserve, she praises the appearance of his room and expresses her satisfaction at seeing him so comfortable, but observing that he has a book she asks pardon for having interrupted him at his studies, and says she will go away at once. Jean, however, is charmed by her attention, and mildly encourages her to remain. Thereupon, with coquettish solicitude, she busies herself with little details for his comfort; she lights the lamp, brews him a cup of tea, and then seating herself at the piano plays one of Chopin's Nocturnes.

Music is a passion with Jean, and under the spell wrought by Fanny's exquisite touch of the piano keys, he ceases his longings for home and shows his intoxication by looks that betray his admiration. When she rises from the piano her eyes wander about the room until they rest upon the picture of Jean's country home, which she starts to praise, when her attention is caught by a picture of Caondal's statue of Sapho. This causes her to start with surprise,



"Good day, friend, I thought you might be lonesome."

which observing, he asks if she is not acquainted with the sculptor. For a moment she fears that Jean has learned of her past life, but his frank face quickly reassures her, and with intent to dismiss the subject so painful to her, she tells him that possibly she knows Caondal, but that her dislike of artists of every kind is so great she prefers not to speak of them. But Jean has such appreciation for the beautiful, and especially for the genius that produces things that delight and refine, he answers: "And yet art is very beautiful; its mission a grand one. It should make life happier, the heart better." Jean has thus unconsciously ventured upon ground where grow the weeds of platitude and dangerous deception, for she, a consummate dissembler, perceiving her advantage, takes up the thread of his philosophy and weaves therefrom a net by which to snare his affections:

"That which I call beautiful is to have your twenty years, and you, my friend, proud and brave. To feel one's heart so strong that no hindrance can come to fetter its sublime aspirations. What I call beautiful, is that by which the whole being raises itself by love above all rancor; or, submitting to the eternal law of love, two beings are united indissolubly, heart to heart."

Jean is so enraptured by her speech that he leans over her shoulder

like one completely charmed, and presently ventures to kiss her, with which demonstration she feels that her influence has triumphed; that the young, the innocent Irene, for whom she, with the instinct of a woman of the world, divined he had tender thoughts, was driven from his heart. To more certainly complete her conquest she sings exquisitely an old ballad of his country, "Far away I have wandered so long," etc., which so pleases him that he makes surrender to her subtle charms, and now the new life, of shame leading to disgrace and tragedy, begins.

In the third act the first scene opens in a garden-restaurant at Ville d'Avray on a Sunday. Jean and Sapho after living together a year in the city, have taken a cottage here, where, for a few months, they live in quiet and believe themselves very happy. Near by, however, is an old resort to which one day Jean wanders, where, to his great surprise, he finds many of the persons whom he met at Caondal's costume ball, and after greeting several he sees Caondal himself, who greets him effusively, and presently asks if Sapho is still with him? Jean is so surprised he cannot quickly answer, whereupon Caondal, thinking Jean does not understand to whom he refers, says: "Yes, Sapho, Fanny Legrand, Sapho, the beautiful model!" In an instant the truth flashes upon Jean; the sudden paleness of his face betrays his secret to the experienced eye of Caondal, but recovering himself Jean replies carelessly, "Oh, that is finished for a long time; I do not see her now," hoping by such deception to hide the shame that he has not realized before. But his misery has now only its beginning, for, unable to withdraw from their presence, Jean hears from Caondal and his friend, La Borderie, the full story of her amours, the many lovers she has led to ruin, her advanced age, disguised by clever tricks, and how she was for years mistress of Caondal himself, who took her from the gutter and lived with her until he was supplanted by the poet La Gonnerio; that this last lover was a brute who maltreated her shamefully, but she served him so harshly in return that he had to call the police to rid himself of her, after which he went away and composed spiteful verses about her. Even this revelation, that is as poison, rank and fatal to his hopes, his heart, his ambitions, is not all that his unwilling ears have to hear, for Caondal continues his story of shame by telling of her next lover, Froment, an engraver, whom she made a forger through her extravagant demands, but being brave to the end was so compassionate that she threw him a kiss when he was being led away to prison. Since she lost Froment she has rarely been constant to any one for more than a month, nor has she given much attention to the child begotten of her by the



"What infamy! too vile art thou, with name best known for its disgrace."

poor engraver. This exposure of the woman he has so blindly, stupidly, disgracefully loved, is more than his moral sense can bear, and resolved now to relieve his conscience and save himself from hopeless degradation in the eyes of his companions, Jean confesses his guilty life of a year, and implores pardon for the falsehood he has uttered, swearing that he will make amends swiftly by repudiating Sapho, as a vile thing fit only for his contempt.

Scarcely is his honest resolution made when before him appears Fanny, radiant with smiles, but Jean, inflamed with anger for her deceptions, heaps upon her the bitterest reproaches, reminding her of his innocence, the purity of his devotion, the confidence he has given her, the sacred love that has prompted all his acts, for which she has given him in return deceit, falsehood, infamy, a heart base, a soul black with shame, a name that is best known for its disgrace.

When Jean repulses Sapho as a creature too vile for human association, she gives him no censure in return, but sorrowfully answers:

"It is well, I leave broken by suffering,
My heart dying of shame and despair;
I leave never to see you again.
Farewell to all happiness and hope."

Jean turns away, disgusted with the world and its cruel disappointments, at which Sapho faces the gossipers, who have exposed her secrets, and calling them cowards, vipers, promises to live to curse and probably to revenge herself for the heart-sufferings they have caused her.

In the fourth act Jean has returned to his home in Avignon, where he has been joyously welcomed, the evening before, and in the little chamber of his boyhood he is expressing his happiness at being once more among true friends and true hearts. How the old familiar sounds of the farm gladden him in the early morning! Going to the window he throws open the blinds to look out again upon the dear landscape, the warm sunlight on the water at the mill, and the horizon fringed with vines, cypress and olives, wearing their liveries of quiet green upon the hill slopes that fall down into the laving Rhone. He feels rejuvenated by these sights, that tell him of his moral convalescence and his escape from toils that had steeped his soul with a guilt which he would expiate by devotion to his parents and to Irene.

The days following his return to Avignon are happy, placid, restful, rapidly erasing from his remembrance the darkest page of his life history, when suddenly Fanny appears at the old home, sorrowful, and soulfully repentant. Jean is touched by her changed appearance, and by the grief that has furrowed her cheeks, and by the despair that lingers, like a dying ember, in her now lustreless eyes. She advances slowly, solemnly, half hesitant, like one remorselessly shut out from all sympathy, and with trembling voice she thus addresses him:

"Oh, do not blame me now for coming!
Far from thee, how my heart has suffered.
But now I see you, it would smile again.
I've wept so much; how much you'll never know!
I am so changed; do you not see how much?"



"Come, my child, let me embrace you as in other days."

Jean appears to be little affected by her plaintive her no ill, and asks her if she will remain at the she answers that she knows not where to go; that the brave its inclemencies, with no solace save remembrance dreams that restore for the time her happiness, in her in, and arranges her hair as he so liked it; that the cottage she may yet occupy, but it is so drear, so ghostly since he left it, haunted by recollections of what has been, and rustling with terrifying spectres of the miserable, the dark and dreadful present.

Jean, in softer voice, bespeaking his pity, tells her the winters are always gloomy in the country and advises her to return to Paris, whereat, seeing his heart is impressionable to her pleadings, she reminds him of ner helpless state, and promising to be loyal wife, and servant to his wishes, she implores him to think of the happy year they spent together, and to come back to her that she may give him her devotion, which is boundless and constant.

Jean compassionates her grief and feels the power of her passionate persuadings, but recoils at thought of her past life, which he declares lives always and takes from him the right to renew the confidence in which he once held her.

Fanny protests that it is not her fault that she has been victim to evil circumstances, to inexorable fate that has cursed her life. But Jean refuses to leave the pleasant home, the true friends, the happy scenes of childhood, to bear again the cross which she imposed by her deceptions, the shame and contempt in which the world now holds her.

Stung by his coldness, with much spirit she accuses, "I know the truth; here they have made you hate me. They would have you marry another; and you so weak would spurn my tears and laugh at my distress. 'Tis bad." But immediately remorseful for her boldness, she craves his pardon, confessing she is wrong, and that such thoughts are not harbored in her heart, saying, "I love you, love you dearer than life.

In this last parting, oh,
look upon my

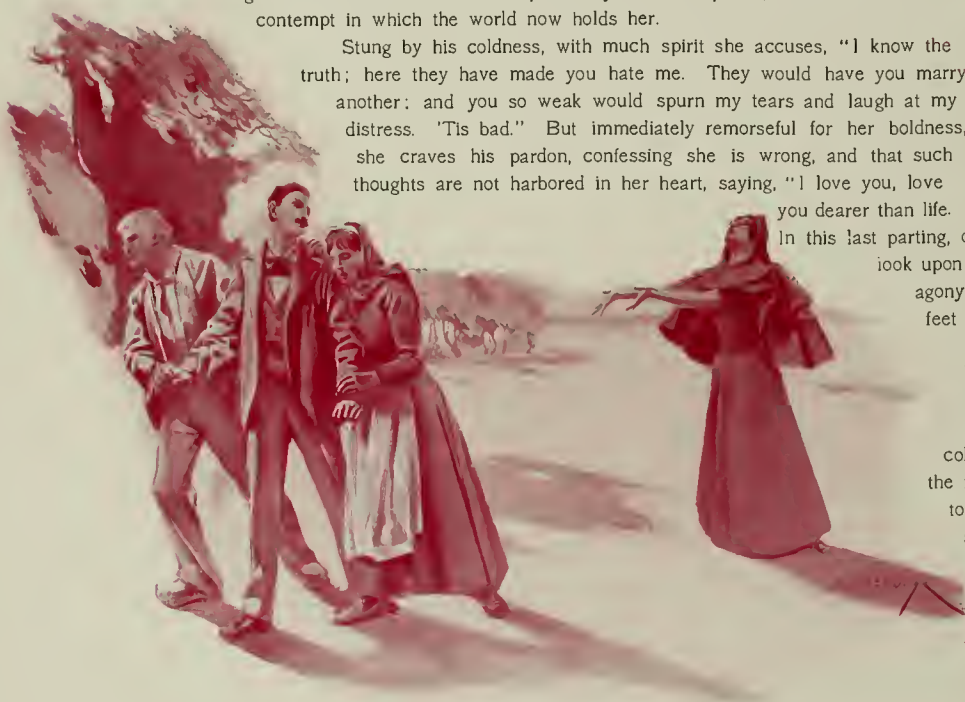
agony, and pity, pity, as at your feet I fall."

This painful interview is brought to an end by the arrival of Jean's parents, who lead him away and coldly bid Fanny begone. In the fifth act Fanny has returned to Ville d'Avray. It is winter and the little cottage looks lonesome and deserted, with the wide stretches of country around it all covered with snow. Fanny sits alone

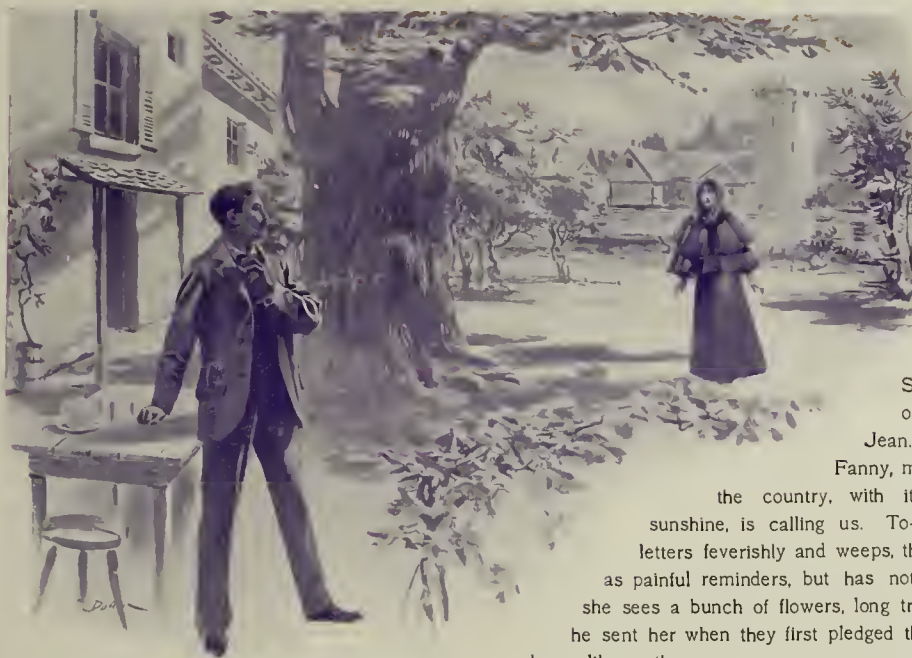


"For one short year I was your wife.
In that dear home.
At your return my heart will bloom again,
As in the bright days past."

"My friend! my friend!
they have lied to thee!"



"In this last parting, oh, look upon my agony."



"Don't be angry with me for coming,
One should not leave without a last farewell."

"Was it necessary to love, for one day of such suffering,
Was it needful to live in such soft sunny days,
To renounce it all, to leave it, perhaps to die
Without the consoling thought of faults forgiven?"

"I understand to-day I would his soul have ruined:
To bitter grief condemned his future life.
I with my past could not have made him happy.
Alas! how I blaspheme in saying wife!"

"Yonder a little being, frail and innocent,
Is calling for me with a touching voice.
That little one, my son,
Whom I have left so long,
I would now find him and hear again
From his pure lips the sweet name, 'mamma.'
All my future happiness I feel is there,
And the hope supreme of making of my boy an honest man.
I must leave all, abide all, for him."

The rudeness with which Fanny was driven from his home so awakened the pity in Jean's heart that he is unable to content himself at Avignon; and to succor her in distress, which haunts him continually, he determines to find and help her. It is while she is sorrowfully brooding over the broken past that Jean returns to the cottage, which he enters with anxiety to see her, and yet with hesitation, because of the rebukes of conscience and his moral cowardice. He expects, however, to receive a happy welcome, but this hope is disappointed, for instead of joyous meeting, she receives him coldly, and though very pale and trembling, she summons courage to bid him leave and forget her, as she is going away to a place where he may not follow. Her manner, which he takes to be a repulse of his address, exasperates him, for he makes no doubt she has found another lover: he cannot understand how, if her devotion be strong, if her love be pure, she can be so indifferent, so ruthless, so angered by his return, which so short a while before she prayed for. The old passion, adulterated though it was with the knowledge of shame, beamed so brightly that his moral vision was impaired, and he failed even to the end to realize its iniquity. But loving still, despite her faults, bound to her by an

in a cheerless room, sorrowful and ruefully reflective: "To-morrow I leave, since it must be so. Brave heart, do not fail me in my resolution. Poor Sapho! I have my life forever lost; all hope is dead; henceforth all happiness is fled. The world has exiled me. Oh, what will bring forgetfulness? So much I've loved him!"

She opens her desk and taking out a package of letters from Jean, she reads from one: "My

Fanny, my wife, my well-beloved one,

the country, with its quiet shade and sweet sunshine, is calling us. To-morrow!" She kisses the letters feverishly and weeps, then resolves to destroy them as painful reminders, but has not the heart to do so, when she sees a bunch of flowers, long treasured, but now faded, that he sent her when they first pledged their vows, and she continues her soliloquy thus:

irresistible chain of attachment, heart-sick with an immedicable longing, Fanny's coldness excites Jean's profoundest jealousy, and in a very whirlwind of anger, thus does he bitterly reproach her: "Thus for you I have foresworn myself, and have left all to return to you. The hearts that loved me, my future, that dear home, with its vines and laurels, yes, I have left all dear things for you. I have seen my mother weep, and felt her hand as she held me back from that last farewell. For me all hope, all love, is vanished; every dream has faded, and now when I need you most you would forget and leave me. Yes, go, do not prolong my sufferings, go! and rejoin your new lover!"

The very manner of his accusing, the grief that is plainly joined to his anger, the intense jealousy that manifests itself in his revilings, clearly betrays to her, skilled as she is in interpreting the passions of admirers, the infatuation that still chains him to her. She plainly perceives that the power of love is predominant in his nature, and that she is still the object of his strongest attachment. Under the spell thus renewed she is roused from her dejection, and with bounding heart she repents her evil resolutions to quit the world, its vanities and disappointments, its

heart-burnings and mental sufferings, and in ecstasy she answers him passionately: "Ah, you love me yet! Do not deny it. In your eyes I read the love of other days. Those dear, delicious days! I rest here, I adore you (she throws herself in his arms). But you are pale, my friend!"

Jean.—"What have you said? 'My friend!' Only that one word, and yet how it recalls a frightful memory!"

Fanny (drawing herself away weeping).—"Ah, after this, would you commence again to torture my poor soul in speaking of my past? Is it for this you come to me, who believed you gave me pardon?"

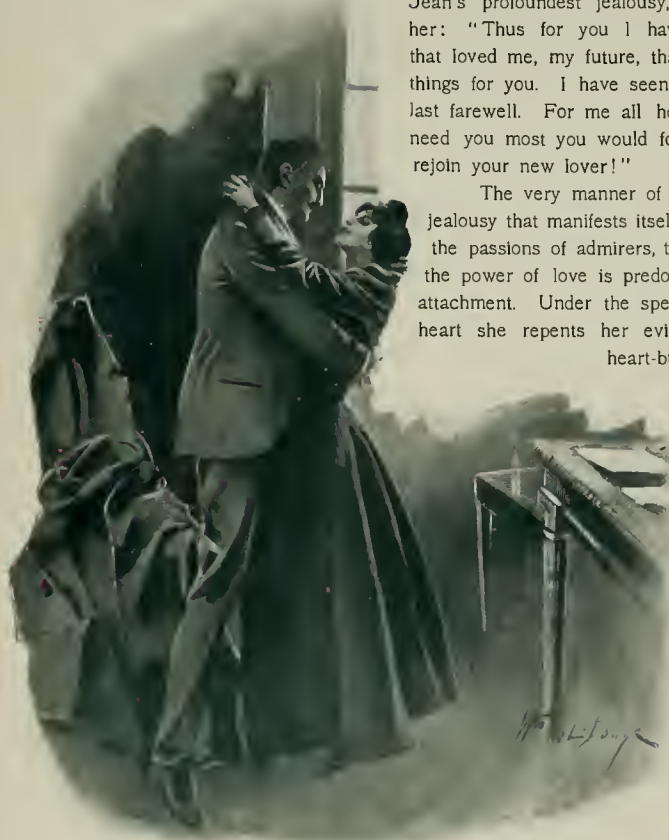
Jean.—"Yes, yes; it is true. I am mad!" Whereupon he casts himself into a large arm chair in a faint. Fanny, frightened at the sad wreck before her, tries to revive him, which she succeeds in doing; but worn and exhausted, he soon falls asleep. This permits her to carry out her resolution to make a sacrifice of her feelings, and to save him the disgrace which renewal of their relations would cause. Softly, to herself, she therefore utters: "Shall I remain here? No, no; 'tis better to part thus, guarding closely in my wounded heart his last dear kiss of love; his last fond thought. Never will he forget, but I feel now a curse will

follow every kiss! It is the hour! So it all ends!" Going to her desk she takes out paper and pen, and writes:

"Farewell, my friend, I leave you now forever,
Oh, do not curse me, do not wish me ill,
Because I love you, will love you always,
And weep in saying this, my last farewell!

Curtain.

"FANNY."



"Ah, you love me yet! I do not deny it;
The love of past days, those happy days."



A SKETCH OF MASSENET.



SO JEALOUS is human nature that it is extremely rare men are esteemed at their true worth during life, and therefore to speak of the living as being the equal of the great who are dead, is iconoclasm so rank as to be regarded as sacrilege; nevertheless, I shall venture such boldness as to assert that Massenet, whose prænomen he has discarded, is, with all possible respect to other French composers, one of the most talented that France has produced.

This really remarkable man was born at Saint-Etienne (Loire), May 2, 1842, whose father was an ironmonger by trade, but served as a superior officer under Napoleon I., while his mother was daughter of a commissary under the first Empire; but the son inherited no military ambitions, his earliest aspirations and requests being to acquire a musical education. In pursuance of his inclinations he entered the Paris Conservatory of Music in October, 1851, and became a pupil in the piano class of Laurent, where he displayed such aptitude that a famous career was predicted for him. His study, however, was interrupted by removal of his parents to Chambéry (Savoy), but in 1857 he returned to the Conservatory, and two years later took first prize for piano recital. Thereafter his progress was both brilliant and rapid. In 1861 he entered upon the study of harmony, under Reber, one year later became a pupil of Ambroise Thomas, and in 1863 captured the prix de Rome for musical composition, which honor was increased one week later by him winning first prize for counterpoint and fugue. The composition which gained for him the honor of a prize pupilship was a cantata for three persons, which was interpreted at the concourse of distribution by such famous singers as Vandenheuvel-Duprez, Gustav Roger, and Bonnehee.

After a residence and study of three years at Rome, Massenet returned to Paris, and in 1866 married Mademoiselle de Ste. Marie, one of the most charming and accomplished of women, whom he first met in Rome, while she was studying piano under Sgambati, who at the time was a pupil of Franz Liszt.

Massenet's first production for public presentation was a one act poem entitled "The Grand Aunt," performed at the Opera Comique in April, 1867, in which M'lle Heilbron made her debut with M'lle Girard and Monsieur Capoul, all of whom soon afterwards became famous singers. Following the "Grand Aunt," was a concert number which he produced for the leader Pasdeloup, but it was not until 1872 that he essayed serious work in the operatic field, in which year (November 30) was produced at the Opera Comique his "Don Gæsar de Bazan," which had a most favorable reception, and which advanced him at once to the front rank of French composers.

The renown which he gained through his creation of "Don Gæsar" was much increased the following year by his oratorio "Magdeleine," a composition of wonderful beauty and permanent fame. In the same year (1873) was also produced his "Les Erinnyes," an antique tragedy in two parts, produced under the leadership of Edouard Colonne, at the Theatre de la Odeon, January 3. This opera Massenet rewrote and enlarged, in which improved condition it was performed in 1887 under the leadership of Lamoureux, and on August 2, 1897, it was magnificently presented at the antique theatre of Orange, Colonne conducting, before M. Felix Faure, president of the Republic.

In March, 1875, appeared his "Eve," a mystery in three parts, given under Lamoureux's leadership at the sacred harmony concerts, and between the years 1873 and 1875 he also composed a number of clever orchestral suites for popular concerts. April 27, 1877, was produced for the first time his first effort at Grand Opera, "The King of Lahore," which was a work presented with unprecedented luxury by Mr. Halanzier, who held the post of director of the Paris Grand Opera.



In this initial performance Mademoiselle Josephine de Reszke, sister of Jean and Edouard, appeared in a leading role. While the production of "The King of Lahore" added very much to his reputation as a composer, it was the presentation of "Eve" that gave him the greater official recognition, for he was made chevalier of the Legion of Honor as a mark of national appreciation of his wonderful musical talent. Further and more distinguished honor was conferred upon him in 1878 by his election as a member of the Fine Art section of the Institute of France.

Massenet's principal compositions after 1878 are the following: Two recitals of "The Virgin," a sacred legend in four scenes, first given at the historical concerts of the Grand Opera in May, 1880. In December, 1881, was produced his "Herodias," a four act opera, first performance of which was at the Theatre Royal de la Monnaie, Brussels. In January, 1884, appeared his "Manon," a five act opera, produced at the Opera Comique, Paris, where it was received with almost unexampled appreciation. Following "Manon" was "The Cid," a four act opera first performed at the Theatre de l'Opera, November 30, 1885; "Esclarmonde," a four act romanesque opera, represented at the Opera Comique, temporarily established at the Theatre des Nations, on May 15, 1889, with Sibyl Sanderson in the title role, in which she appeared one hundred nights consecutively. In 1891 was given the initial performance of his five act opera, "The Magician," followed in January, 1892, by his "Werther," a lyric drama in four acts, finished in 1886, performed for the first time at the Imperial Opera House, Vienna. A few weeks later, at the same theatre, his "Chimes" (le Carillon) ballet was produced. In 1893 "Werther" was revived in French at the Opera Comique, and on March 15, 1894, was produced for the first time his "Thais," a lyric comedy in three acts, and in June of the same year there was given at Covent Garden, London, the first representation of his "Navarraise," with Emma Calvé in the title role. The initial production of his "Portrait of Manon," a one act opera comique, belongs to this year, which was revived the following season. In November, 1897, was performed, at the Paris Opera Comique, Massenet's latest five act opera, entitled "Sapho," a lyric dramatization of Alphonse Daudet's famous novel. The opera was written for Emma Calvé, who made her appearance in the title role with a success fully rivaling her creation of "Carmen." In addition to the list above, Massenet has written the score of a four act opera, entitled "Cinderella;" "Griselde," a three act opera and prologue, from the mystery drama of Armand Silvestre and E. Morand, also an oratorio in three parts, all of which were presented before the close of the century. Massenet's compositions are not confined to operas and concert pieces, but cover a wide field, for he has produced besides those particularly named eight suites for orchestra, many theatre overtures, fantasies for violoncello, a heroic march, "Szabadi," scenes for solo, chorus and orchestra, and the music for more than one hundred popular songs for church and piano.

For eighteen years, from 1878 to 1896, Massenet held the position of professor of counterpoint, fugue, and composition at the National Conservatory of Music, under his beloved master, Ambroise Thomas. In 1888 he was made an officer of the Legion of Honor, and in December of 1895 he was chosen a commander of the Legion, one of the highest honors that is within the gift of the nation to grant. He is also an honorary member (by election) of the Academy of Fine Arts of Belgium, and holds similar positions of honor in academies of every nation in Europe.

It was my fortune and pleasure in 1897 to spend a day with Massenet and his charming wife at their summer home, which is in the suburbs of Pourville, near Dieppe, and to become acquainted with the domestic life of the distinguished composer, who is as devoted to his family as he is to his profession. Massenet is peculiar in respect to his methods of work, as he is also in the character of his diversions—idiosyncrasies, some may call them, which genius may indulge without exciting protest against nonconformity with custom. One of these marked inirringements of general usage is to be found in that he never employs the aid of any musical instrument while engaged in composing, the sound of which he declares has the effect to divert and distract his inspirations. The other singularity is the noteworthy fact that though a passionate lover of field sports he is Buddhistic in his scruples about taking the life of any creature. Adjoining his villa is a large preserve well stocked with small game which he delights in pursuing, tramping all day through brush and briars, but when he surprises his quarry he is content to merely point his gun and hold his fire. The sport to him is in the hunting, not in the killing, the healthy exercise, not the cruel pastime. This merciful disposition thus shown is the key-note of his temperament, which is singularly refined, amiable, and sympathetic, characteristics which are scarcely less marked in his wife, who is popularly regarded as being one of the most agreeable women of France.





Decorated with J. M. Bland

W. & L. EFTWICH-DODGE 1894

Lucia Di Hammermoor

(AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING BY WILLIAM DE LEFTWICH DODGE)

LUCIA (bereft of reason)—*"Frown not so harshly on me,
Although 'tis true I signed it ;
Ah, look not, love, so fearfully ;
Break not the ring I gave thee ;
And do not curse me ; I was the victim
Of a cruel brother."*

ACT III.—SCENE VI.

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR.

(LUCY OF LAMMERMOOR.)

MUSIC BY DONIZETTI—WORDS BY CAMMARANO.



ISTORY and fiction present few more melancholy characters than "The Bride of Lammermoor," the subject chosen by Sir Walter Scott for one of his most interesting but extremely pathetic novels. The story has been translated into several languages, and in the Italian it fell under the notice of Donizetti, who was quick to perceive its power and suitableness for dramatic and lyric treatment. Accordingly he set about to secure a libretto of the story, which he obtained from Cammarano, and after making several marked changes in the manuscript presented, and rewriting the whole of the last act, he composed the score of what proved to be his masterpiece, "Lucia di Lammermoor."

This beautiful opera was introduced to the public in Naples, September 26, 1835, where it achieved an instantaneous success. Singularly enough, the opera was never popular in Germany, but became a favorite in both France and England, and is still frequently sung in every country of Europe save Germany, and is often heard in America, being in the repertory of nearly all prima donnas.

The action of the story takes place in Scotland, about the year 1669. Sir Henry Ashton, Lord of Lammermoor, and brother of Lucy, in order to recoup his fortune, dissipated by reckless living, and to escape punishment for participating in conspiracies against the king, designs that his sister shall wed Sir Arthur Bucklaw, a powerful and wealthy lord. His plans are opposed by a secret attachment formed for Lucy by Sir Edgar, of Ravenswood, whose family has long been at strife with the Ashtons. At the time of the action, Sir Edgar is on an embassy to France in the interest of Scotland, and during this absence he sends many affectionate letters to Lucy, some of which are intercepted. Lord Ashton is so incensed by this clandestine correspondence that, in order to prejudice the mind of Lucy against her lover, he shows his sister a forged letter that contains what the maiden considers proofs of Sir Edgar's infidelity. By such base tricks he so poisons the mind of the poor girl that she consents to make herself a sacrifice to her brother's necessities by becoming the bride of Lord Arthur. When the marriage contract is signed by Lucy, Edgar suddenly appears among the witnesses, having returned from France to claim her hand. A row results, and a tragedy is barely averted through the persuasions of the old chaplain of Ashton house, at whose earnest entreaties Edgar withdraws, pronouncing curses upon the house of Lammermoor. The infuriated Henry seeks Edgar in his retreat, and a meeting is arranged between them for the following morning, when Edgar resolves to end his now miserable life by falling upon his adversary's sword, a fate, however, which though he prays for, does not come.

The infamous measures employed by her perfidious brother to prejudice Lucy's mind against the man she truly loves, are soon to bring their punishments. Bound by hateful ties, the unfortunate maiden is the more powerfully impressed



"Search ye well through the neighboring valley;
Through the ruins of yon gloomy tower!"

by Edgar's reproaches, which she half believes are justified through some dreadful treachery, and she becomes unconscious of her surroundings, and refuses to participate in the festive celebrations. At night, when the castle is filled with joyful revelers, the groans of a dying man are heard in the nuptial chamber, which instantly hush the noise of the celebrants, and all stand aghast with fear until the chaplain, bolder than his fellows, bursts open the door. A horrifying sight greets his startled eyes! Lord Bucklaw is discovered upon the floor, stricken by a mortal wound, while Lucy, reft of her reason, stands over her victim brandishing a sword red with blood. While this terrible scene is being enacted, Edgar is waiting Sir Henry in the church yard of Ravenswood, where a duel is appointed to take place between the two. Lord Ashton, upon learning of the murder of Lord Bucklaw and the madness of Lucy, overwhelmed with fear and remorse, has no mind to keep his engagement, and flees the country. Edgar remains in the church yard until a train of mourners coming that way from the castle tells him that Lucy has succumbed to her grief, and at the same instant her death is announced by the tolling of a funeral bell in the castle tower. Unable to support his sorrows longer, Edgar plunges a dagger into his heart, and falls by the tombstone of his ancestor.



Act I, Scene I.—The opera opens with a representation of a vestibule to the castle of Lammermoor, which is the residence of Sir Henry Ashton and his sister, Lucy. The retainers of the Lord are gathered, and Norman, the steward, bids them search the neighboring ravine, and the ruins of a near-by gloomy tower, being suspicious that some evil person is in hiding thereabout who is designing a treachery against the house of his master. The retainers promise to explore the mystery, and as they pass out Sir Henry Ashton and Raymond, his chaplain, enter. Norman is quick to notice the deep dejection of Sir Henry, and questions him of his troubles, to which answer is made that his peace is destroyed by his ancient enemy, Edgar of Ravenswood, and by his failing fortune, which nothing can repair, except through Lucy's marriage to Sir Arthur, and she stubbornly refuses to retrieve his squandered estate by sacrificing her heart to one she cannot love. The chaplain admonishes Sir Henry that it were wrong to urge his sister into marriage so soon after her mother's death, when the heart, enslaved of grief, dreams not of love.

"Dreams not of love?" Norman interposes. "Thou art fearfully mistaken." Thereupon he proceeds to tell that a few days ago, while Lucy was returning from a visit to her mother's grave, she was attacked by a furious bull, and would have fallen a certain victim had not a rifle ball, fired by a saving hand, dropped the infuriate beast dead at her very feet! Henry is all eagerness to learn who was Lucy's saviour, but Norman is unable to tell more than that he is a stranger to the castle inmates, who hath contrived to meet her every morning since beside the fountain, but confesses his suspicions that this lover is none other than the hated Sir Edgar. At this revelation the anger of Sir Henry becomes tempestuous, which he expresses in a powerful aria:

"Each nerve with fury trembleth,
At these dark thoughts thou wakest," etc.;

"Ah, no, I pray thee—in secrecy and silence
Still let our loves concealed be."

and rejecting the consolments of Raymond and Norman he calls upon Heaven to avenge this invasion of his home, and to strike with thunderbolt this enemy whose perfidious speech is set to beguile an innocent woman, and to stain a noble lineage. While this storm of anger is breaking, the chorus return from the search and make their report to the eager Henry, telling him that after a patient search of the ravine, and about the fountain, they invaded the tower, where at their approach a man issued from a portal, and quickly mounting his horse, sped like lightning down the valley. Sir Henry presses to know his name, and receives answer that a passing falconer, of whom they inquired, pronounced that it was Lord Edgar, of Ravenswood. At utterance of this name, Sir Henry's fury burns with fiercer glow, and he swears to take vengeance; nor can his purpose be suspended for a moment by the entreaties of his chaplain, who vainly counsels patience and prudence, while his resolution is supported by Norman and the chorus, who vow that Sir Edgar shall not escape their hands.

When the stage is vacated, Scene IV succeeds, showing a park fountain in a deep wood. Lucy and Alice, her attendant, enter, who have come, by appointment, to this rendezvous to meet Sir Edgar. After waiting a while, Lucy betrays fear and impatience at the failure of her lover to appear, and exhibits such emotion that Alice ventures to ask the

cause. To allay suspicion of her real misgivings, Lucy tells Alice that she shudders at remembrance of the tale of a Ravenswood knight, who, it is related, murdered his lady-love, and ruthlessly threw the body into the waters of this very fountain; that the story is a true one she cannot doubt, for upon one occasion the shade of this poor woman did appear to her upon this dark brink, and with threatening gesture pointed to the fountain, which forthwith turned to blood, whereupon the spectre vanished. During this painful interview, Lucy sings two plaintive, but sweetly dramatic arias, "Silence o'er all was reigning," etc., and "Then swift as thought up-cleared the sky," etc., which form an effective contrast to the passionate arias of Sir Henry that expressed his vengeful purpose.

When Lucy concludes, Alice discovers Sir Edgar approaching, and discreetly she withdraws behind the trees that the lovers may not be embarrassed by her presence. Sir Edgar rushes forward and embraces Lucy, whose pardon he beseeches for having kept her waiting beyond the appointed hour, but explains that powerful reasons have detained him, and that on the coming morn urgent duties compel him to proceed to France. Lucy is stricken by this announcement, and piteously pleads if she is to be thus abandoned, whereupon he tenderly consoles, and promises that before he departs he means to seek her brother and offering him in truth and friendship a pledge of peace between their houses, ask his consent to wed her. Lucy implores him to renounce this intent, and to conceal their love until a more auspicious time arrives to declare it. Sir Edgar is quick to perceive that her misgivings are due to knowledge of Sir Henry's implacable resentment, and therefore hotly he answers that though brother to one most dear, he forgets not that it was this same brother who slew the elder Ravenswood, robbed the house of its greater possessions, and yet vindictively pursues the son, who has done him no ill. Lucy tries to calm his outbursts of anger, but Sir Edgar answers that his heart is now inflamed with a deadly fury, and deliberately he tells her:

"By the lone tomb, o'er the cold grave
Where my father's bones lie moulding,
With thy kindred eternal warfare
To the death I swore to wage."

But the pleading eyes of the fair Lucy, and her persuasions, framed in words of love, cause his heart to relent, and he promises to forego all thought of vengeance if here, in the eye of Heaven, she will swear true faith to him and in mutual vows forever unite her fate with his. Their troth is thus solemnly pledged, and with promises to exchange letters each day, the two sing an exquisite farewell, "My sighs shall on the balmy breeze," etc., which is one of the most beautiful numbers of the opera, even though every aria and duet is a rare gem of melody.

Act II, Scene I.—The rising curtain upon the second act discloses an apartment in the castle of Lammermoor, in which Sir Henry and Norman soon appear, the latter to announce that Lucy will shortly be here, at which Sir Henry startles, for he has a secret dread of meeting her, having for his own selfish ends resolved to sacrifice her feelings, and to compel her to marry Sir Arthur Bucklaw. The treachery and perfidy of Sir Henry is disclosed in this interview, wherein the events



"Witness these mutual vows of love,
Thy fate forever to mine united!"

following the parting of Lucy and Sir Edgar at the fountain are narrated. Sir Henry trembles with misgivings, as his friends and kinsmen gather at the castle to meet the bridegroom, Sir Arthur, who is this day to marry Lucy. "But, should she still pertinaciously persist in opposing!"

Sir Henry anxiously exclaims. Norman assures him that no fear may be rightly entertained, since the long absence of Sir Edgar, the letters intercepted, and the false news to be told her, will quench her love for Sir Edgar as a faithless swain, and that furious hate will possess her, rendering her tractable to a brother's wishes.

Sir Henry is reassured by the positive speech of Norman, and as Lucy is seen approaching, asks him: "Thou hast the forged letter? Give it me; now haste thee to the northern entrance, there keep watch and wait the approach of Arthur, and with all speed on his arrival conduct him hither!"

As Norman passes out, Lucy enters, hesitating, reluctant, and showing heart sufferings. Sir Henry greets her cheerfully, and proffers his blessings, expressing hope that this day, sacred to love and Hymen, may prove most auspicious. But Lucy affects to hear him not, her mind steeped

with a settled melancholy, her heart wounded by disappointments and fears. When more fiercely Sir Henry bids her speak, she asks him look upon her sad face and see there reflected the bitter anguish she suffers through his

"Thou fallen traitress to heaven, to love!
Accursed forever be the day on which I saw thee!"

cruelty; his evil wiles and forceful urgings to compel her marriage with a man whom she cannot love, in violation of her pledges to one who deserves her fealty. He commands her cease these recriminations, since they proceed not from a knowledge of her situation, but rather are the outpourings of an innocent heart whose infatuation must now receive its first shock, by discovery of a baseness which a professed lover may possess even while swearing his fidelity. Thereupon Sir Henry begs her to bestow her hand upon one who will prove a noble husband, promising to make no complaint of what he pronounces to be her degrading attachment, if she will accept Sir Arthur. She implores him to cease his urgings; that to another she has her true faith sworn, and beseeches that he spare her heart, to which all his words are dagger thrusts. Unable otherwise to dislodge her devotion to Sir Edgar, Sir Henry produces the forged letter, which he imperiously hands to her, saying: "Thou may'st see how he keeps his faith with thee. Read it!" The poor girl takes the fatal letter and with trembling hands and suffused eyes reads the forged note; suspecting no treachery, she believes she has been treated with scorn, deceived, and pours out her lamentations in a duet with Sir Henry, which constitutes one of the most powerful numbers of the opera:

"My sufferings and sorrow, I've borne without repining
I hoped that the morrow some comfort might dawn.
Thy name thou disgraceth, thy blood thou debaseth,
Thy love he disdaineth, thyself he defameth," etc.

A noise without interrupts the song, and Sir Henry tells Lucy that it is the sound of gladness at the arrival of her destined husband, and that the marriage rites are now soon to be celebrated. Lucy, in despair, expresses a wish that the grave may be her refuge rather, at which Sir Henry exposes a fresh sorrow, by informing her that the fatal hour of dark despair is now arrived, for having secretly abetted a late rebellion, and his connection therewith being known, he has been apprehended, and that for present safety he is indebted to Sir Arthur, who alone has power to save him from a traitor's doom. Terrified by the prospects of punishment for his crimes, and mortified by his impoverishment, he would sacrifice his sister to his needs, therefore does he appeal to her affections, first persuading, and then threatening, beseeching her to wed Sir Arthur, thereby to save him from an awful fate. Her sisterly obligations Lucy confesses, but she protests that her heart belongs to another, whose life to her is as dear as her own, whose devotion has



been pledged, and to whom she owes a higher debt, as promised bride to be. In this hour of supremest trial she calls heaven to support her; but Sir Henry disregards her grief at having to refuse him, and thus does he implore:

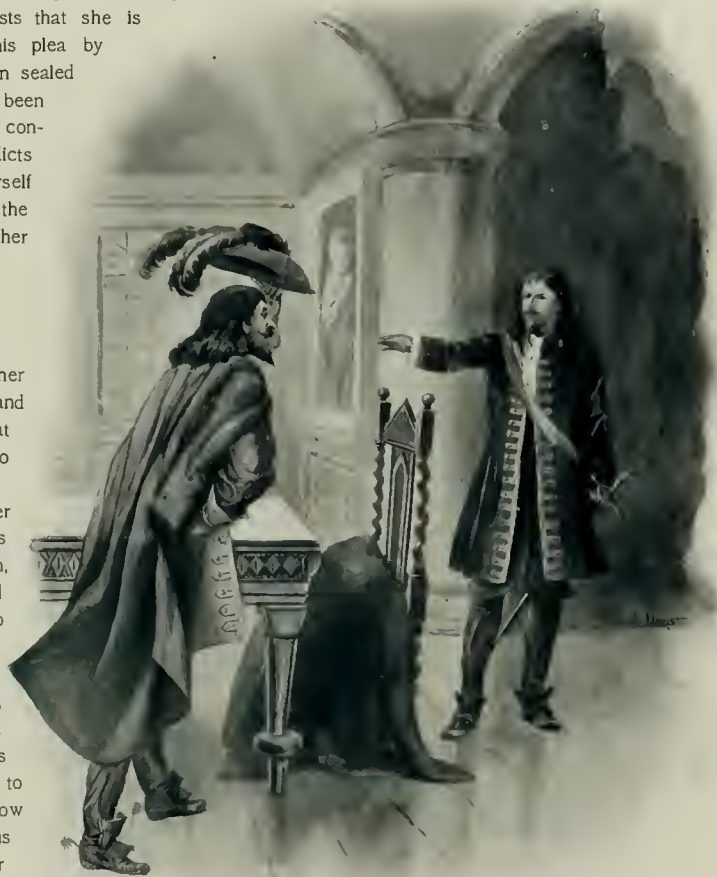
"I am thy brother—wilt thou save me?
See the axe by one thread hanging;
Hark! the deep-toned death bell clanging.
Hath affection lost all power?
Wilt consign me unto the tomb?"

She turns upon him, and answers his distress by picturing her own, that cannot be less appalling, and that she is justified in asking him to make sacrifices as great for her as he would have her perform for him; that as she is sister, she claims his brotherly love and protection; that she is dying of a wound inflicted through his cruel will, and driven to a doom more dreadful than axe can inflict, since marriage against her wish will consign her to a living death; that fear and hate will be her dower, and thus her life be turned to a grief greater than she can support. His pleadings failing to move her, the two pass off the stage, and in Scene III Lucy and Raymond (the chaplain) appear in a corridor of the castle, where to her request for news Raymond sorrowfully tells her hope has departed; that, suspecting her brother had intercepted the correspondence between her and Sir Edgar, he had himself conveyed a letter to Sir Edgar, in France, to which, though received five weeks since, no answer has been returned, thus proving his unfaithfulness. When she asks for his counsel, Raymond frankly advises her to submit to destiny. Still she protests that she is bound by holy nuptial vows, but he dismisses this plea by reminding her that such bonds are binding only when sealed by priest before the altar, where hers has not yet been taken. To all her arguments Raymond opposes his conclusions, and lastly, to overcome her will, he predicts that horrors greater will befall unless she resigns herself to that which fate has decreed; that from the tomb the unquiet spirit of her mother begs her to save her brother from the executioner's block:

"See yon angry shade arise before thee,
Mark yon blood-stained scaffold, drenched with gore!"

Unable longer to withstand the counsel of her chaplain, worn to weakness by her great grief, and belief that Sir Edgar has proved faithless, Lucy at length tearfully consents to yield her will, and to become a vicarious victim to save her brother's life. Raymond blesses her unselfishness, and consoles her with assurances that the angels will account her as worthy the highest place in the celestial congregation, while she begs him that having conquered he will guide and support her in the trial she is now to enter upon.

Scene IV.—The next scene introduces the audience to a large gathering in Lammermoor Castle, including Sir Henry, Sir Arthur, Norman, knights and ladies related to Ashton house, pages, squires, citizens and domestics, who await appearance of the bride to sign the marriage contract. A festival of rejoicing now begins, by a choral song: "Hope brightly beams before thee now," etc., at the conclusion of which Sir Arthur gives his hand to Sir Henry as a brother henceforth, and promises to be his defender; but marking the absence of Lucy, he anxiously inquires what detains



"Within these drear walls
Darest thou thus at this hour present thee?"

her. Sir Henry quiets his eagerness by giving promise that she will arrive presently, but that if she comes in tears her demeanor may be laid to grief for her mother, whose death she mourns continually. Sir Arthur's anxiety is somewhat allayed, but he suddenly calls to mind report

that Sir Edgar, some months since, with mad presumption had dared to ask for Lucy's hand, which Sir Henry admits is true, but the painful interview is ended by the appearance of Lucy who comes forward slowly and sorrowfully, her eyes stained with tears. To Sir Arthur Sir Henry remarks, "Still for our mother weeping!" As she draws near to Sir Henry he directs her to her husband, but in an aside cautions her not to be ungrateful. Sir Arthur makes a low obeisance, and then kneels at the feet of Lucy, accosting her with endearing expressions, but she listlessly waits, unconscious of her situation, until Sir Henry, somewhat roughly, bids her approach and sign her dower. Still she hesitates, until more fiercely commanded she consigns herself a sacrifice, and signs the paper, breathing her misery in every look and gesture.

Scene V.—Scarcely is the



"By my dead father's ashes, thy heart's blood I'll drain."

marriage rite accomplished that binds her to Sir Arthur, when the great doors to the reception room are thrown open, and to the consternation of the whole assemblage Sir Edgar enters! For a moment he and Sir Henry stand glaring at each other, their craving for revenge being restrained, however, by regard for Lucy, which Sir Edgar voices, followed by Sir Henry, Sir Arthur, Lucy, Norman and Raymond, composing a sextet which for beauty, power, and intensely dramatic expression, has no superior in the whole realm of opera. Though the murderous hands of the rivals are restrained, Sir Edgar makes bold to announce that he is come to claim for bride she who has already sworn her faith and pledged her life to his. Raymond interposes to break the evil news, that all hope must now be relinquished, since Lucy has been wedded to another, and tries to persuade him to leave the room. Sir Edgar refuses to quit the place, and defiantly threatens that blood will flow if any one shall dispute his right to be here. He will not accept as true, even though the chaplain declares it, that Lucy has violated her nuptial pledge to him, until being shown the marriage contract he places the paper before her streaming eyes, and in deepest anguish asks if she has signed it. Overwhelmed by her great grief she feebly answers, "Yes," her tongue refusing its further office, whereat in the madness of despair he thrusts the pledge which she gave him at the fountain into her hand, saying: "Beholdst thou this token? Perfidious heart, I return it!" She gasps her dissent, and would explain, but impetuously he refuses to hear her words, and pours upon her head the vehemence of his execrations, calling her traitress to heaven, and to love, and curses the day, the hour, the place, of their meeting. The indignation of the company threatens Sir Edgar with violence, but he continues to defy them until he hears Lucy praying:

"By the woe thou hast now heaped upon me,
I do implore for him thy kindly care.
Since to me thou hast doomed a life of misery,
Ah, refuse not my last, my dying prayer."

This prayer touches his heart, and when advised by Raymond and the ladies to withdraw, Sir Edgar leaves the room, as the curtain falls upon the second act.

Act III, Scene I.—The last act opens with a weird scene, representing a chamber in the tower of Wolf's Crag, the ancestral home of the Ravenswoods. Sir Edgar is seated therein, melancholy in thought, as the scene without is gloomy, for night's shadows are obscuring the landscape, and a storm is raging that shakes the world with loud thunders, as if pronouncing his woeful destiny. While engaged in rueful contemplation, his bitter reverie is disturbed by the sound of hoof-beats, and as he rises to determine who the visitor may be, thus to visit his castle in such inclement weather, the door is pushed open, and in Scene II Sir Henry obtrudes his presence. Sir Edgar is startled, and demands to know what desperate gain he seeks that dares him to venture within these drear walls at such an hour, when death is in the very air, and asks if his heart does not quake with fear as a living man descending to his tomb? Sir Henry betrays no alarm at his isolation, and valorously answers that even while sounds of mirth and gladness are echoing through the halls of Lammermoor, celebrating his sister's marriage, so savage is his thirst for vengeance that he has left friends and guests to brave this furious tempest, that he may challenge him to render account of his actions by the sword. Eagerly Sir Edgar accepts his enemy's defiance, and pledges to avenge his father's death while redressing his own wrongs. A duel is thereupon arranged that shall take place at the earliest dawning of the approaching day, in the churchyard of Ravenswood.

Scenes III and IV show the banquet hall in Lammermoor Castle. Sir Henry returns and joins the merry guests, who are still celebrating the wedding of Lucy with songs and feasting. These happy revels are suddenly suspended by the hurried entrance of Raymond and Norman, the former appearing so agitated that the company look upon him with deepest terror, and inquire the cause of his perturbation. When he is able to speak, Raymond relates that scarcely had the bride and bridegroom retired to their nuptial chamber, when passing near the door he heard a harrowing shriek within, which was followed by a cry of anguish, such as might be uttered by a man in his death-struggle. Quick to offer help he forced an entrance to the apartment, when his terrified gaze fell upon Sir Arthur, lying upon the floor, besmeared with blood, while above the body Lucy stood brandishing a sword like

some fell demon, who with reason fled, cried loudly: "Where's the bridegroom?" Fierce as was her attitude, yet a smile swept across her pallid face, lighting it with a ghastly splendor, for she was now mindless of her crime. The chorus is horror-stricken by this dreadful tale, and as they bewail the deed, in Scene V Lucy enters, her wedding robes stained with blood, her hair disheveled, and with a wild expression that betokens the flight of reason. Slowly she advances towards the affrighted guests, and as the trembling light falls upon her pale face, she rehearses the thoughts that speed through her wrecked mind. She fancies that her woes are past, and she believes herself by the side of Sir Edgar, at the favorite trysting place, near the fountain. But this sweet delusion is suddenly dispelled by a vision of a fearful phantom that raises its gory arms in admonition, and then thrusts before her to separate her from Sir Edgar. A pleasant picture thereupon succeeds, the grisly spectre takes its flight, and there falls upon her pleased ears the sounds of heavenly harmony, to which she joyfully listens and believes it a wedding hymn, that the guests are waiting, and that Sir Edgar is leading her to the altar. Her heart is bursting with happiness, as she pictures the sacred tapers, smells the nuptial incense, and imagines that the priest is pronouncing the vows that seal her to the one whom she adores. In the exuberance of her joy, she expresses her gratitude to heaven that has given her a husband dear, and a life thronging with blisses.

Scene VI.—The ravings of Lucy are interrupted by Sir Henry, who, entering, learns of her crime, and cries loudly for a condign punishment. All exhort him to stay his hand, and Raymond calls his attention to her distracted state of



"Her reason has forever fled from her!"

mind, with reason fled forever. Poor Lucy, unable to comprehend the commotion of the guests, and unmindful of her surroundings, renews her babblings about Sir Edgar, begging:

"Frown not so harshly on me,
Although 'tis true I signed it;
Ah, look not, love, so fearfully;
Break not the ring I gave thee.
And do not curse me; I was the victim
Of a cruel brother.
I love but thee, my Edgar!
Whom didst thou name? was't Arthur?
Ah! fly me not; have mercy, pray!"

As Lucy sings plaintively, "Shed thou one tear of sorrow," which expresses the deep suffering that has wrecked her intelligence, and tells of a grief that has fallen upon her by reason of his cruelty, Sir Henry is seized with remorse, which he declares will henceforth be his just condemnation. He bids his kinsmen tenderly remove and care for her, and thereupon Raymond turns upon Norman, assailing him with bitter invectives as the author of this dreadful crime and Lucy's misery, whose perfidy and traitorous acts, in revealing Lucy's love for Sir Edgar, and in fanning the feudal flames that were smouldering before in the houses of Ravenswood and Lammermoor, will be fully punished by the justice awarded at heaven's bar.

Scene VII shows the exterior of Ravenswood Castle, and the cemetery where lie buried the members of that ancient house. The time is night, some hours before dawn, but Sir Edgar, eager to meet his enemy, has repaired to

this doleful place thus early, where he is seen feeding his desire for vengeance, with reflections upon the wrongs that he has suffered at the hands of Sir Henry. The white grave-stones, the stillness of the place, and the dark pall that hangs over the scene, arouse in him, presently, rueful thoughts, until he forgets his anger in the melancholy feelings that come over him. Sadly he soliloquizes of his situation, of the loss of her who had been the inspiration of his dearest dreams: of the tombs that mark the resting places of his ancestors, and he comes to realize that naught now remains to endear him to a life that can offer him nothing but misery. In despair, therefore, as the last fated scion of a doomed race, his hate vanishes, and more desirous now to end his own wretched existence than to gratify resentments, he admits that gladly would he fall upon the blade of his adversary, since through the ungratefulness of a woman who has mocked and derided him, the world has become to him a boundless desert. His sorrows he describes in a melancholy aria:

"The wild flowers soon will shed their bloom
Around my sad and lonely tomb," etc.

Scene VIII.—While Sir Edgar is thus waiting the coming of Sir Henry, a troop of wedding guests from Lammermoor Castle come down the hill dolefully chanting of the death of a lovely maiden. He stops them to ask the cause of their wailing, and when they tell him that Lucy is dying, he becomes as one stricken dumb with a grief that paralyzes all the human senses. The chorus resuming, sing:

"This unhappy marriage hath of reason quite deprived her;
All forlorn and broken hearted life hath from her nigh departed."

At the same time the deep sound of a funeral bell, tolling the passing of a soul, arouses Sir Edgar to an appreciation of his misjudgment, and the loss of her who was alike victim to

"Yes, my fate is now decided,
In death we will not be divided!"



his own distrust and a brother's selfishness. The weight of sorrow he now resolves to quickly put off by joining Lucy in that better land. Plaintively he sings his last farewell, leaving the sorrows of the world, and the cruelty of his enemies, to join in heaven the one who has been divorced from him by death.

The chorus, observing Sir Edgar's despair, and his desperate purpose to end the miseries of his disappointed life, try to restrain his fatal intent, but their efforts are unavailing, for drawing a dagger from beneath his cloak he plunges it into his breast and dies amid the tombs of his ancestors, with a prayer upon his lips that he may soon meet Lucy.

An aria was specially written by Donizetti, which is sometimes sung by Lucy during the mad scene, and by some prima donnas it has been rendered with very great success, but it is only the very few that are capable of interpreting the words with proper effect, for which reason the song is generally omitted, from even the most elaborate representations. The song is also rarely seen in the usual librettos but for the purpose of completeness a translation from the Italian, with the repetitions avoided, is given as follows:

"Oh, for an eagle's pinions, that I might fly to thee;
All ties but thine I'd banish, for thou art all to me.
More swift than eagle's flight, mine to thy sight should be
O'er land and sea, from kindred dear, I'd follow thee;
Leave country, kin, and all else I love to follow thee."

"Tho' from earth thou'st flown be-
fore me,
Tho' from these fond arms they
tore thee,
I'll follow thee, I'll follow thee."

"Horror dire! Ah, may kind heaven pardon grant him from above!"



A SKETCH OF DONIZETTI.



GAETANO DONIZETTI, one of the sweetest of Italian singers, though from a country famous for its many great composers, was born at Bergamo, November 29, 1797, and died from a stroke of paralysis in his native town, April 8, 1848. His musical studies were begun at an early age in Bergamo, under his father's resolution that he should be a church organist, but he had so little inclination to become either musician or composer, that after attending the conservatories at Bologna and Naples, he ran away and joined the army. After a few months of service, however, he tired of the lazy life and found

that he had a greater liking for music than for war. While stationed with his regiment at Naples, in 1818, Donizetti wrote his first opera, "Enrico di Borgogna," which was brought out in Vienna, but proved a decided failure. Undeterred by the ill success of his maiden effort, he wrote "Il Falegname di Livonia," which was finely staged and sung in Rome, in 1822, with such remarkable public demonstration that the composer was released from further military service, and carried in triumph to the capitol, where he was crowned and acclaimed one of the great musical geniuses of the nation.

Donizetti's early efforts at composition were in imitation of Rossini's style, and while they were remarkably melodious they showed much carelessness, so it was not until 1830 that he produced any work of distinct originality and thorough construction, entitling him to more than a local fame. The first of his best operas was "Anna Bolyn," brought out at Milan, followed two years later by "The Elixir of Love," which he is said to have written entire in fifteen days. With equal facility he composed "Il Furioso," "Parisina," "Torquato Tasso," "Gemma di Vergi," and "Lucrezia Borgia," only the last of which long survived. It was in 1835 that his greatest and grandest opera, "Lucia di Lammermoor," was produced, the popularity of which has in nowise diminished, and may be pronounced an imperishable work. His popularity was so great after "Lucia" was given, that he was accepted as the successor of Rossini, and invited to Paris, where he wrote "Marino Faliero" for the Theatre des Italiens. His stay in Paris was less than two years, when he returned to Italy and composed in succession "The Martyrs," first produced under the title, "Polinto," but forbidden by the censorship of Naples; "Daughter of the Regiment," and "The Favorite." After these operas were presented, Donizetti went back to Paris, and then made a considerable tour of Europe, but still continued his compositions, which included "Linda di Chamonix," "Don Pasquale," "Don Sebastian," "Maria di Rohan" and "Catarina Cornaro" (1844), which was his last opera, and perhaps his greatest failure.

Besides the several productions named, Donizetti composed a great many musical pieces, a complete list of which would cover a full page of text, comparatively few, however, having been heard by persons of the present generation. It is a singular fact, that while Donizetti is to be credited with some of the best operatic creations, that will keep his fame bright for centuries, few composers have written so much as he that may be pronounced wholly bad. This strange thing may be due in part, at least, to his remarkable disposition, which no one was capable of understanding. He was subject to fits of melancholy and depression that often lasted for weeks, at which times his mental faculties were aberrant, and in the last three years of his life actual insanity supervened, from which he never recovered, though his immediate death was due to physical paralysis.

Altogether, from the production of his first musical composition, in 1818, until 1844, when his last opera, "Catarina Cornaro," was performed, Donizetti wrote no less than sixty-seven operas, six cantatas, six songs and duets, six ballads, five ariettas, twelve canzonets, seven masses, one requiem, several vespers, besides miscellaneous works. One of his operas, "The Duke of Alba," was discovered by accident, in a sealed box in his native town, among some effects which his family had thought of no importance. The find was heralded as a piece of extraordinary fortune, and under the excitement thus promoted, the opera was produced in Italy with much eclat; but despite such skillful advertising it proved a failure. This opera was, in fact, one of his earliest works.



GAETANO DONIZETTI.

